

UNITED NATIONS  
  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
12th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 18 October 1990  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (A/45/137-E/1990/35)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued) (A/45/470)

AGENDA ITEM 96: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued) (A/45/225, A/45/227, A/45/280, A/45/338, A/45/422)

AGENDA ITEM 99: QUESTION OF AGING (continued) (A/45/207, A/45/420)

AGENDA ITEM 104: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (continued) (A/45/365; A/C.3/45/3)

1. Mrs. EKONG (Nigeria) said that the report of the Secretary-General, contained in the supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137), showed with statistical clarity that in many of the developing countries, especially in south Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, standards of living and social conditions had dropped below the levels existing 10 years, and in some cases 20 years, earlier. Poverty, infant mortality, illiteracy, environmental degradation, the loss of skilled human resources to the North and the decline in financial resources to deal with medical crises, such as the AIDS pandemic, were some of the most serious social problems in the countries of the South.

2. Poverty was the biggest problem affecting the world social situation. According to the World Bank, by 1985 more than 1 billion people had been living in absolute poverty: 55 per cent in south Asia and 38 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. The Nigerian delegation was gravely concerned at the World Bank's forecast of an increase in the number of poor people, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty not only paralysed the material progress of the individual and his group, but virtually closed all other opportunities. If the impoverishment of the world's population was allowed to continue, social, political and economic growth would be jeopardized, and instability intensified, in the decade of the 1990s.

3. At the national level, Governments should pursue a strategy that relied on greater utilization of individual labour and involved policies that used market principles for individual activity and enterprise. It was also necessary to ensure and maintain a pattern of resource allocation that provided basic social services to the poor, especially in the areas of primary health care, family planning, nutrition and primary education. That had been the experience of the Nigerian Government in its struggle against poverty.

4. However, national efforts must be reinforced and complemented by increased development co-operation and better international economic conditions. The Nigerian delegation urged the developed countries to increase aid flows and financial assistance to the most affected developing countries to deal with the

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(Mrs. Ekong, Nigeria)

problem of poverty. Increased aid was required for many anti-poverty programmes which were well conceived but lacked funding. Her delegation regretted that, in spite of the developing countries' increased need for financial resources to tackle poverty, official development assistance (ODA) from the developed donor countries had fallen from 0.36 per cent in 1988 to 0.33 per cent in 1989. The Nigerian delegation called on the developed countries to implement the undertaking to attain the agreed target of devoting 0.7 per cent of the GNP to ODA and, where possible, to increase concessional external resources for development and for tackling the problem of poverty.

5. There were other serious problems, such as infant mortality, the drop in revenue of developing countries, and maternal mortality, which had been an obstacle to advancing the status of women and improving the welfare of children. The equality of life had been seriously threatened by environmental degradation arising from the adverse consequences of scientific and industrial development, on the one hand, and the unregulated and irrational use of the earth's resources that had resulted in deforestation, desertification and the depletion of energy resources on the other hand, as well as natural disasters. All countries had a responsibility for the preservation, protection and security of the environment, particularly the developed countries, which had the technological capabilities to make that possible. The Nigerian delegation looked forward to the Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992.

6. The problem of drug production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution had had a destructive effect on social and political life in many countries. The Nigerian delegation reiterated its position that the solution of the problem involved two aspects: elimination of demand and destruction of sources of supply. Solutions should also be pursued at the social level by educating the public against the use of drugs and by rehabilitating addicts.

7. Her delegation supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to give effect to the operative provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/82, proclaiming 1994 as the International Year of the Family. It also commended the Secretary-General for the organizational arrangements he had undertaken as specified in paragraph 10 of document A/45/365.

8. Every effort must be made to build a society that was not only secure, and respected the rights of all individuals, but was also compassionate and caring. The Nigerian Government had increased resources for the provision of more facilities to disabled people, particularly the blind. The Nigerian delegation expressed the hope that the Committee would adopt far-reaching recommendations on ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons in 1992.

9. Nigeria noted with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving young people, and wished to commend the Department of Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs for the activities in follow-up to International Youth Year. Nigeria encouraged the formation of youth organizations so as to enable young people to express their views on all subjects.

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(Mrs. Ekong, Nigeria)

It welcomed and fully endorsed the recommendations set out in paragraph 14 of document A/45/422, particularly the recommendation concerning the urgent need to revitalize the resource base of the United Nations Youth Fund in view of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year and the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995.

10. Mr. KRENKEL (Austria) said that his country's social system and the Austrian Constitution were based on the premise that enhancing the population's quality of life, particularly that of children and young people, and establishing a social welfare State were of the highest priority. Austria therefore endorsed the conclusion in the Secretary-General's report on policies and programmes involving young people that the spirit of International Youth Year must be revitalized. The Austrian Government attached considerable importance to youth questions and was actively participating in the preparations for the International Year. It had consequently helped to establish the organization HOPE 87, whose secretariat provided assistance in dealing with youth and employment issues, particularly in the developing countries. So far HOPE had provided financial assistance for youth-employment projects in Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, Nepal and the Philippines. Financial promotion of more projects would be intensified in the future.

11. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the problems of the disabled, Austria believed that a variety of recommendations deserved the General Assembly's attention, but had some reservations with respect to others. It was necessary to be very selective in giving the Secretariat additional tasks within the framework of the Decade of Disabled Persons.

12. The Austrian Government was very interested in the question of aging and had adopted comprehensive measures to improve the situation of the elderly in Austria. The United Nations Office at Vienna had made some progress in the implementation of the Vienna Plan of Action since its adoption, in spite of meagre human and financial resources. The Secretary-General's report, which contained a programme of action for the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Aging, was a good one, and Austria supported the proposals set out in it.

13. Austria had studied the Secretary-General's note on the International Year of the Family carefully, and agreed that a detailed proposal on the subject should be reviewed by the Commission for Social Development early in 1991. It attached great importance to the subject and would participate actively in the preparations for and observance of the Year, which would deal not only with the role of the entire family in society but should also address such issues as youth, the situation of women, the elderly, the disabled and a wide range of family-related topics.

14. He wished to reiterate that major international instruments could not be implemented until concrete measures were taken to strengthen the United Nations Office at Vienna. Asking for more reports and further measures through various resolutions would add to the Secretariat's burden rather than enhance the quality of its reports and its general policy-making capacity. Austria was ready to



(Mr. Krenkel, Austria)

exercise restraint because it believed that social-policy and social-development concerns were of vital importance to the enhancement of quality of life for all. The United Nations and the secretariat dealing with social development and humanitarian affairs must focus on specific topics and give guidance to Member States in order to enable them to meet their individual challenges. New approaches towards and ways of using scarce resources in the most efficient manner must be found in order to guarantee that social policies and programmes had the high status they deserved on the international agenda.

15. Ms. VAN DER ZIJL (Netherlands) said that, since concern for the environment now was a guarantee of earth's survival tomorrow, millions of young people were calling for immediate action in order to build a solid base for the future, and a clean environment was an essential part of the future.

16. At the current turning-point in history, after the Berlin Wall had been torn down and at a time when the new détente between East and West could lead to arms reductions and cut-backs in military expenditure, the funds thus released must be used to improve quality of life on earth, in accordance with the wishes of the public at large, whose attention had been drawn to the many recent manifestations of environmental degradation: ozone depletion, the hole in the ozone layer above the Antarctic, climate change and the destruction of tropical rain forests, as well as such disasters as the oil spill in Alaska, the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, and the dumping of hazardous waste in developing countries.

17. In an attempt to tackle the issue of environmental degradation, the Netherlands had published an environmental policy plan in 1989, whose aim - to ensure that today's environmental problems were not passed on to future generations - could only be achieved if current patterns of production and consumption were changed; the Netherlands had allocated slightly more than \$4 billion to protection of the environment for the period 1990-1994. She also wished to mention the Bergen Conference, held in May 1990, which had resulted in the Plan of Action for a Common Future and in which non-governmental and youth organizations had participated, the latter having produced their own plan, entitled "Tomorrow Today".

18. In an endeavour to give added impetus to policy-making in the area in question, young people in the Netherlands were to hold a national demonstration at The Hague on 22 April 1991, International Earth Day. They would present a document containing proposals for the various ministries. In the month preceding the demonstration, local action groups would engage in a campaign calling on people to try to live in an environmentally sound manner. Since environmental pollution was a matter of international concern, the demonstration would have much more impact if young people all over the world were to hold demonstrations on the same day.

19. In addition to the efforts to increase people's awareness of environmental problems, attention must be devoted to formulating and implementing international public policy and rules to prevent pollution. Young people in the Netherlands had great expectations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

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(Ms. Van der Zijl, Netherlands)

to be held in Brazil in 1992, and were willing to play a constructive part both in the preparations for the Conference and in the Conference itself. Just as young people had in the past often been at the forefront of the fight for freedom and democracy, they were willing now to take up the fight for the survival of the planet. Young people felt responsible for the future environment and supported pressure groups such as Greenpeace, because the consequences of most environmental problems would manifest themselves in 20 to 30 years' time, when today's policy makers would no longer be in power.

20. It was important to bring about a change in the behaviour and lifestyles of not only the older but also the younger generation. All countries of the world should accordingly develop and implement environmental education and training programmes in schools and universities, and the United Nations could play a vital role in identifying the needs of each country through a comparative survey of existing environmental education programmes. The UNEP/UNESCO International Environmental Education Programme provided an appropriate framework for the promotion of environmental education. The Government of the Netherlands, for its part, was preparing a special educational programme on nature and the environment and had invited youth and environmental organizations to take part in the development of that plan because of their knowledge and experience in that field.

21. As early as 1972, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had said that channels of communication between the Organization and young people were inadequate. Eighteen years later, only a few of the 159 Member States had included young people's representatives in their delegations. All other countries should follow that example, since young people had a right to participate in the shaping of their future.

22. In conclusion, she said that young people wished rhetorical proposals to be set aside and environmental issues to be approached pragmatically, with observance of existing environmental laws and guidelines, which in many cases were ignored.

23. Mr. AL-GHANEM (Saudi Arabia) said that Governments should understand that the disabled did not wish to be an object of pity or charity, but wanted to enjoy their legitimate rights as citizens. Society, for its part, should endeavour to understand them and change its attitude towards them, since anyone who was normal today might be disabled tomorrow.

24. His Government, which was keenly aware of the situation of disabled persons, had implemented an educational and rehabilitation programme for the disabled so that they could become useful members of society, and had taken part in the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981 and in many seminars and symposiums.

25. The measures adopted by the United Nations and, in particular, the United Nations Office at Vienna, had made it possible to explain to Governments how important it was to attend to the needs of disabled persons, who were much neglected, especially in many developing countries, and were not provided with the

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(Mr. Al-Ghanem, Saudi Arabia)

services they needed, even though they accounted for 10 per cent of the world population, in other words some 500 million persons, 80 per cent of them in developing countries. At the meeting of experts convened by the United Nations and held in 1988 in Stockholm to review progress during the first half of the Decade, it had been seen that, even though most Governments had not adopted the necessary measures, they had at least become aware of the need for such measures and were prepared to commence work in that field, which gave reason to hope that within the space of 20 years the specific problems of disabled persons would be resolved throughout the world.

26. The 92 recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General for the current session were highly relevant and their implementation would therefore help to solve many of the problems of disabled persons. Decision makers must understand the problems of disabled persons and give them priority, for example by setting aside 1 per cent of military spending to address the social problems of disabled persons.

27. After examining the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/470), his delegation had prepared a draft resolution which included the views of disabled persons themselves, and urged the members of the Committee to adopt it so that the United Nations could use it as a basis for implementing the recommendations of the meeting held in Finland and other similar meetings held under the auspices of the Organization. Meanwhile, even though hundreds of resolutions had been adopted in the past, disabled persons continued to find themselves in a precarious situation, as was the case in most of the developing countries. For that reason the co-operation and support of all were needed to smooth the way ahead and enable disabled persons to live a happy life.

28. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas) said that significant initiatives in the field of social development had been taken in the 1980s, such as the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and International Youth Year. Difficulties could be observed, however, in sustaining those activities. Although action for social development must be initiated at the national level, through government policies and programmes, there were serious economic constraints preventing many countries, especially those of the developing world, from undertaking extensive social programmes.

29. At the international level the problems faced included resource constraints and difficulties in monitoring performance in the social fields. In any event, pressure was being exerted on the international community to rethink and reappraise its approach to achieving objectives and monitoring progress, an exercise in which both Governments and relevant United Nations bodies must participate.

30. For example, a more coherent approach must be adopted in preparing for the International Year of the Family, proclaimed by the General Assembly for 1994. In recent years, demographic changes and the demands of modern life were among the factors exerting both positive and negative influences on the family. The celebration of the International Year would afford both opportunities and

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(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

challenges in addressing problems like family violence, single parenting, health, housing, drug abuse and other serious issues. Welcome developments were the introduction of the question of discrimination against women and the adoption of administrative and other arrangements so that substantive work might begin at the next session of the Commission for Social Development. Her country had provided data in connection with the preparation of a draft programme for the International Year of the Family and plans to establish a national co-ordinating body in the near future in order to improve the flow of information between her country and the Social Development Division.

31. On the subject of disabled persons, the Bahamas, aware as it was that no society intent on development could exclude any segment of its population, viewed with interest the recommendations of the group of experts which had met in Finland in May to advise the Secretary-General on the preparation of the feasibility study on ways and means to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. For example, a Disabled Desk was to be set up in the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Affairs which, among other responsibilities, would advise the Government on policy concerning the disabled with a view to integrating them into national and local development plans, co-ordinating relevant national activities, increasing awareness of disability issues and systematically assessing the specific needs in each area of disability. Areas targeted for early action included the enactment of legislation to prohibit discrimination against disabled persons and protect their rights, and to promote alternative activities to increase their participation in culture and sports. The Desk was to be headed by a disabled person, and the new arrangements were intended to support the efforts of voluntary organizations spearheaded by the Bahamas National Council for Disabilities and to allow for better co-operation and co-ordination among the various ministries and departments of government which provided financial, technical and material support for the disabled.

32. Since 52.25 per cent of the population of the Bahamas was under 25 years of age, her country had a keen interest in United Nations activities in the field of youth. National policy in that area followed the guidelines laid down for International Youth Year. That task had been greatly facilitated by the National Youth Advisory Council, a standing body which had served as a national co-ordinating committee for International Youth Year activities. The primary focus was on the development of skills which would give young people new options for their social, economic, cultural and political development, particularly through the expansion of employment opportunities and the provision of the education which they needed in order to take advantage of those opportunities.

33. In order to counteract unemployment among youth, the Government had promoted programmes such as Junior Achievers, which was designed to acquaint young people with economic principles and business practices and to give them an opportunity for self-employment. The programme had attracted some 6,000 participants in 10 years. In the field of education, there had been success in increasing school retention rates, free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 had been established, and a full secondary education system, structured training and post-secondary education



(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

opportunities existed, as well as income support where necessary. A scholarship programme had greatly increased the number of young people who had access to higher education, which had expanded the number of professionals and technicians. Moreover, sports development was viewed as an integral part of national development, as it was not only a unifying force but also a source of discipline and other positive attributes. That had been demonstrated by the well-known success of Bahamian athletes over the years, and sports development would continue to be a priority for the Government.

34. Ms. ZABOLAI-CSEKME (International Labour Organisation) said that the activities of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) concerning youth, older workers and the disabled derived from its overall mandate to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment, to foster equality of opportunity and treatment and to improve working conditions and the work environment.

35. Unemployment among youth had reached critical levels in many regions of the world. ILO was convinced that measures to reduce youth unemployment had to be an integral part of national development plans and economic policies, since specially designed youth employment programmes often had a limited scope and a fragmentary nature. In addition, such schemes would have very limited results in areas where fiscal and monetary policy discouraged job creation or where lack of access to credit, skills or technologies imposed barriers to self-employment. Accordingly, ILO was carrying out a research project which involved the preparation of studies on the status of youth employment in selected countries of Asia and Africa and on the relationship between youth employment schemes and the larger policy framework in which they were set, so that lessons could be drawn with a view to the formulation of sound youth employment policies.

36. Other ILO activities to promote youth employment included the provision of direct assistance to Governments in adjusting training policies and transforming training institutions to meet the needs of the labour market. There were a variety of technical co-operation projects to foster the development of vocational and managerial skills, and others to promote self-employment, particularly in the informal sector, which were aimed at young school drop-outs; special attention was also being paid to training young women for employment and self-employment.

37. With regard to the protection of young people, ILO was promoting the ratification and application by member States of the Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, and through its computerized data bank, located at the International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS), it provided updated information on national or international publications dealing with the occupational safety and health of youth.

38. With regard to older workers, ILO was pursuing three objectives, namely, eliminating discrimination against them in the workplace, especially with regard to remuneration, employment security and social benefits, fostering the social protection of older workers by improving their working conditions and environment and providing them with vocational guidance and training which enabled them to

(Ms. Zabolai-Csekme, ILO)

retain their jobs or to secure new employment, and helping to ensure that older workers had a decent standard of living when they retired and that the transition from active life to retirement had no damaging effects. In order to achieve those objectives, ILO promoted the application of related labour standards and carried out research and operational activities, which included assisting Governments in the establishment of income-maintenance systems and social services for the aged and the administration and functioning of related programmes. A computerized information system provided access to a data base covering pension legislation and similar social security enactments concerning the aged. In 1989, ILO had provided support to the International Institute on Aging in preparing a training programme on income-maintenance and support for the aged in developing countries, which had been undertaken by an expert group. Those activities were fully in keeping with the United Nations International Plan of Action on Aging.

39. ILO was concerned with the prevention of disability and the social and economic rehabilitation of the disabled through both its mainstream activities and specially designed programmes. Since poverty and the malnutrition which it caused were the world's greatest disabling factors, the efforts of the ILO to create employment and income-earning opportunities were an indirect but important contribution to the aim of reducing disability. Another crucial aspect of the Organization's preventive activities was its long-standing struggle to improve occupational safety and health in the workplace. Since its establishment in 1919, ILO had developed a variety of international labour standards promoting maximum safety conditions for workers engaged in dangerous occupations, such as construction, underground work, or the handling of chemical substances.

40. The Organization's principles concerning vocational rehabilitation and the employment of disabled persons were laid down in Convention 159, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1983. The technical co-operation projects designed to implement those principles included assistance to ILO constituents in the formulation and implementation of national policy on vocational rehabilitation and the employment of disabled persons and the provision of vocational guidance and training, placement and employment services to disabled persons; they were executed in collaboration with Governments and workers' and employers' organizations. The importance of such co-operation had been underscored by a seminar on the role of social partners in the training and employment of disabled persons, held in Malawi in May 1990, which had been financed by the Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA).

41. During 1989, 42 ILO projects concerning vocational rehabilitation had been put into operation; of those, 17 national and 6 regional projects had been executed in Africa and 8 in the Middle East. ILO had also served as a focal point for the revision of the development education kit prepared by the Joint United Nations Information Committee JUNIC and non-governmental organizations, entitled "Women and Disability", which had been completed in 1990 and was currently in print.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
13th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 19 October 1990  
at 10 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. COOMBS (New Zealand)  
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Coombs (New Zealand),  
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (A/45/137-E/1990/35)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING  
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued)  
(A/45/470)

AGENDA ITEM 96: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued) (A/45/225,  
A/45/227, A/45/280, A/45/338, A/45/422)

AGENDA ITEM 99: QUESTION OF AGING (continued) (A/45/207, A/45/420)

AGENDA ITEM 104: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (continued) (A/45/365;  
A/C.3/45/3)

1. Mr. ONARHEIM (Norway) said that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had helped to focus international attention on the situation of the disabled. A major objective had been to include disabled persons and their organizations in the decision-making process in order to safeguard their fundamental rights. That had been one of the central tasks of the Disabled People's International, which had been established in connection with the Decade. Much remained to be done at the international level in order to guarantee the rights of the disabled in society and account must be taken of their experience when planning future activities.

2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also applied to the disabled. In addition to an individual's rights to freedom and social security, there was also the right of all persons to equal opportunity and to participate in society. The failure to observe those rights was a critical problem for the disabled. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration laid down the right to security in the event of disability. That was essential if an individual was to participate on an equal footing in society. He also stressed the importance of environmental considerations in dealing with disabled persons and pointed out that environmental pollution had led to new forms of disability.

3. Norway supported the proposal by Sweden to establish an open-ended working group in the Commission for Social Development to draw up a document setting forth standard rules for the equalization of opportunities for the disabled. It was important to focus on the special needs of disabled women. The United Nations should take advantage of the new international climate to deal with the entire range of human rights problems and enhance the status of disabled persons. Hundreds of thousands of children and adults had been disabled by war. Member States should intensify their efforts to improve the situation of the disabled through the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission for Social Development.



(Mr. Onarheim, Norway)

4. Organizations for the disabled based their activities on the view that equal opportunities could be achieved only by compensating for differences. Disabled persons themselves and their organizations represented the most important tools for making progress. Such organizations should be strengthened financially and accorded greater status. Norway supported the proposal put forward at the Meeting of Experts in Helsinki in May 1990 that the United Nations should draw up guidelines for consultation and co-operation between the various States and disabled persons' organizations. Lastly, his Government endorsed the view that the end of the Decade of Disabled Persons should constitute an agenda item of the General Assembly in 1992 and that disabled persons should be allowed to participate in the various national delegations.

5. Ms. PARRINO (United States of America) said that social welfare required the active participation of both Governments and individuals. While Governments could not provide all social services, they should give every person an equal opportunity to achieve a fair share of all that society had to offer. That applied particularly to women and children. Earlier in 1990, President Bush had signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was designed to provide equal access and equal opportunity in all fields of endeavour to 43 million disabled Americans and their families.

6. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/45/470) rightly called for a shift in emphasis from awareness to action. The problems had been identified. National programmes must now be designed to address them. Efforts should focus on providing assistance to all who sought it, particularly in the field of prevention and rehabilitation. The young people of the world were its future and must be given the keys to future success: health and education. It was time to assist nations in carrying out programmes to enable each individual to pursue personal growth to the fullest extent. Ways must be found to ensure that the world's aging population would be able to live meaningful, dignified and independent lives. Programmes must be developed to provide the elderly with services and help them cope with the costs of long-term care. Referring to the note by the Secretary-General on the International Year of the Family (A/45/365), she stressed the need to take into account the substantial differences in family structures, traditions and values throughout the world and underscored the importance of observing the International Year at the national and local level. Lastly, it was essential to make the best possible use of limited resources in carrying out the various tasks under consideration.

7. Ms. BOUKADOUM (Algeria) speaking on behalf of the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union, said that the supplement to the 1989 report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137-E/1990/35) indicated that the economic and social situation of developing countries continued to deteriorate. The serious difficulties facing those countries, compounded by the burden of foreign debt and the impact of structural adjustment measures, had overwhelmed development efforts and jeopardized results achieved through great sacrifice. Like other developing countries, the States of the Maghreb had been severely affected by the economic crisis and its

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(Ms. Boukadoum, Algeria)

social consequences. Determined to meet that challenge, they had established the Arab Maghreb Union in 1989 in order to promote social progress for the peoples of the region and to find common solutions to the most urgent problems facing them, particularly young people.

8. The growing gap between the industrialized and the developing countries posed a serious threat to world peace and security. To establish lasting peace, it was essential to ensure social and economic justice both within and among nations. The United Nations had a clear role to play by promoting international co-operation for the welfare of all peoples. It was hoped that the consensus reached at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly would make it possible to carry out the commitments and achieve the objectives relating to international economic co-operation. The challenges facing the international community required integrated and global measures based on a spirit of solidarity. The Arab Maghreb Union firmly supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/55, which stressed the need to integrate social questions into the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. The establishment of a more just world economic order was essential in order to ensure prosperity for all. The industrialized countries must make the necessary contribution to that effort by providing additional resources.

9. Mrs. MIGNOTT (Jamaica) said that the neglect of social development that had characterized the policies of the 1980s had had grave consequences for the living standards of most of the world's population, especially in the developing countries. The 1990s, however, if judged by recent outstanding developments, held the promise of positive changes for the world's people. In a growing awareness of the importance of social questions, a number of economic and financial bodies had considered that topic in elaborating policies for economic growth and development. The changing approach towards social development must be supported by concerted action to bring about concrete change aimed at improving the living standard and overall well-being of the world's population. The Jamaican Government had initiated a five-year plan for developing the country's human resources at every level of the development process. Specific attention was given to the particular needs of various social groups and special programmes were being considered for the aging, youth, the disabled and families.

10. Concerted follow-up activities for the International Youth Year should be promoted at every level. Jamaica supported the view put forward in the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth (A/45/422) that the tenth anniversary of the Year in 1995 should be commemorated to focus attention again on youth issues. Jamaica also supported the approach outlined in the report aimed at incorporating youth concerns into every part of the agenda. Jamaica's five-year national development plan contained special measures to revitalize youth programmes in the area of training, education, employment and community participation. The attempt to link agricultural training programmes for youth and the land divestment programme was a particular innovation.

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

11. The United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was increasing world awareness of the needs and rights of that specific group. Jamaica would continue to support stronger measures on behalf of disabled persons during the remainder of the Decade and afterwards. The report by the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/45/420) contained a number of innovative and important proposals on the Action Programme on Aging for 1992 and Beyond and the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Aging. Jamaica fully supported all efforts to address the needs of the aging and ensure their active involvement in society. Her Government also supported the observance of the International Year of the Family in 1994 to increase awareness of the importance of the family in bringing about social and economic change. She noted with satisfaction the valuable contribution by non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups in the social area and supported continued close co-operation between those organizations, Governments and the United Nations. Jamaica commended the efforts of UNICEF to draw attention to the plight of the world's children. Her country was committed to protecting the welfare of children and had drawn up measures to enhance family life and the status of children at the national level.

12. Mr. ZAWACKI (Poland) said that the family was the natural and fundamental unit of society, where people learned about human rights and respect for basic values and peace. Yet it was only recently that the international community had begun to recognize its importance. In proclaiming 1994 as the International Year of the Family, the Member States of the United Nations had recognized that the family must be strengthened to equip it to face the challenges and pressures of present-day times resulting from industrialization, rapid economic development and other factors. The needs of the family should be reflected in all areas of policy-making, with special emphasis on individual family members and the need to improve the status of women within and outside the family. Governments should be encouraged to improve public policies leading to better recognition of family values and greater support for differing family structures. The changing composition of the family should be studied as well as the factors leading to family break-up and ways of countering them.

13. The International Year of the Family offered a good opportunity for emphasizing the importance of the family in promoting development, giving the family its true place in society and ensuring that no member was discriminated against. The most urgent, short-term issue was to provide families with their basic needs for survival, including food, housing, water, medical care and access to family planning. Medium-term strategies should aim at improving opportunities for the advancement of basic living standards, through education, employment and social services, in particular for children and the elderly. Long-term strategies should help to promote individual development through cultural and intellectual pursuits. In view of the great differences in family structures, traditions and values, the International Year should be observed at national and local levels, the role of the United Nations being to assist national efforts.

14. The success of the International Year of the Family depended on adequate preparation and widespread support. Poland accordingly welcomed the designation by

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(Mr. Zawacki, Poland)

the Secretary-General of a Co-ordinator for the Year and the establishment of an organizational secretariat within the Division for Social Development at Vienna. His delegation hoped that all States, relevant United Nations agencies and organizations, non-governmental organizations, communications media and the public would play an active part in preparing and observing the Year.

15. His delegation supported the Co-ordinator's proposal that, following the practice in other International Years, consideration should be given to the feasibility of establishing a voluntary trust fund.

16. All States should establish national mechanisms, such as co-ordinating committees, to prepare, observe and follow up the Year, and in particular to plan, stimulate and harmonize the activities of the governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations concerned.

17. As representative of the country which in 1986 had proposed the proclamation of an International Year of the Family, he firmly believed that the Year would offer a unique opportunity for mobilizing efforts to strengthen the family and emphasize its role in the contemporary world.

18. Mr. MAIER (Austria) said that he was speaking as a representative of the disabled community, being head of the Youth and Culture Centre for the Deaf in Graz and President of the Austrian Association for people who were hard of hearing or deaf or afflicted by tinnitus and people with speech impediments, and having worked for the deaf community for 21 years. He had himself been wearing a hearing aid for the past year and therefore knew at first hand the difficulties faced by the deaf in private, social and professional life.

19. He was raising the case of the people he represented in the context of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons because they had received little attention in the past, since their disability was not visible. It was, however, a serious disability in respect of one of the most important elements for human life, namely communication. Despite continual technical development, a hearing aid was not an "understanding" aid, and the public knew little about the problem.

20. Attendance at the recent World Congress of Education for the Deaf in Rochester had confirmed his belief that sign language must be legally recognized as the official language of the deaf so that the deaf community would have all the rights to which any linguistic minority in the world was entitled. Old educational structures must be abolished and the public must understand that linguistic minorities had the right to be educated in their own language. Governments must recognize that sign language was the primary language of communication for deaf persons and should ensure that sign language communication was made available within the educational system and at any Government-sponsored or jointly sponsored meeting, seminar or conference. Speech and sign language must exist together, with the same status. He had published a book on the subject, and sign language had now been incorporated into the curriculum as the 13th language at the institute for interpreters at Graz University.

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(Mr. Maier, Austria)

21. He appealed to members of the Committee to support the urgent request of the people he was representing concerning the promotion of sign language and its development throughout the world. Most deaf people were ready to learn to communicate with the majority of hearing people, but hearing people must accept that sign language was the basis for a higher level of education, the prerequisite for an integrated life in society. Sign language also enabled deaf persons to take part in television programmes, for both deaf and hearing persons, by means of speech, subtitles and sign language.

22. With regard to the year 2000 and beyond, his organization intended to start an international project called "Auricle 2000" to increase people's awareness of the problems of hard-of-hearing and deaf people and to improve their lives. The project would entail a world-wide campaign on behalf of persons with impaired hearing, with annual congresses including lectures on special medical, psychological, teaching and acoustics problems, by experts and by afflicted persons, as well as musical and other performances by artists with impaired hearing. The congress could be followed by activities throughout the world to increase the awareness of government institutions of the problems of impaired hearing, particularly in the developing countries.

23. Mr. GILLIBERT (France), speaking on agenda item 92, welcomed the importance that the General Assembly attached to the problem of disabled people, who formed 10 per cent of the world population. For centuries, handicapped people, life's casualties, had never played a full or active part in their countries' social life. Integration had been an illusion: indeed there had never been any question of trying to integrate handicapped persons: their dependence from birth had been a fact of life. They had merited only kindness and charity, their daily life being reduced to eating, sleeping and surviving. Today, however, parents, friends and, above all, handicapped people themselves, had begun to wake up and shake public opinion out of its indifference, although all too often such efforts met with mass inertia and egoism.

24. Governments must take action and produce policies for integration at all levels: social, economic, educational, cultural and political. That was the urgent task that France had set itself. It was the purpose of the Decade, but it had to be admitted that results had fallen short of expectations. For eight years authorities had been aware of the scope of the tasks and the complex and varying situations in over 150 very differing countries. The problem was how to find an effective approach that would be acceptable to all, within the United Nations. The proposal by the representative of Sweden to set up a working group was worth considering, but the purpose of such a group would have to be clearly defined. In his opinion, it would not be appropriate to establish specific rights for disabled people since the policy of integration required that disabled people should enjoy the same rights as those of all citizens. Life's casualties must be given the possibility of full access to those rights. He regretted that the resources available for the Decade were so meagre.

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(Mr. Gillibert, France)

25. To ensure that the last part of the Decade produced real results, activities must be made as operational as possible and must be based on a clear and precise analysis of priorities. As a first stage, he would propose that Governments should select one or more of the objectives of the Decade, as priorities to be achieved by 1993. For 1990, France had chosen the future of mentally handicapped persons, including the construction of new specialized establishments and specially built dwellings for seriously handicapped adults over the age of 20, since their families were incapable of dealing with the situation. It had also chosen the field of transport. The priorities selected for 1991 were accessibility, integration in school and university, and employment. Countries which had chosen the same priorities might co-operate.

26. In the context of the proposed World Conference, it would be useful if, during the preparatory meetings, each State would indicate what global approach it could envisage, bearing in mind its economic, social and cultural constraints. That would help each country to establish a global policy, taking into account the whole 24-hours-a-day existence of a disabled person. Disabled persons had the right to choose freely the way in which they participated in the active life of their country, but they must be given the means. The advantage of that policy lay in planning. In France, the Secretariat of State for Disabled People and Life's Casualties had been working for two years to give disabled people the possibility of living with dignity and as full citizens. The kind of structure called for by the President and the Prime Minister made it possible to carry out that policy, involving all the members of the Government, elected officials and people at the grass-roots level, uniting in a consensus.

27. He hoped that the term "life's casualties" would gradually replace the word "disabled" which had a negative connotation, suggesting an outcast. The term "life's casualties" was more appropriate and better illustrated the true situation. Social integration should start from birth, through positive information given to parents and preventive medical follow-up. At school, which should be open to all, disabled children were all too often victims of attitudes of exclusion. A constant battle must be waged for children who were different to have the benefit of the education provided for all, in ordinary surroundings. Education must be given by families as well. In the university world, study groups should be encouraged so that disabled students, life's casualties and others, could work together to find solutions for the inaccessibility of universities.

28. In the world of work, legislation must provide for disabled persons to be integrated in the economy. Vocational training was essential to give them the possibility of finding and holding employment. Under French law employment of disabled workers was compulsory in firms with more than 20 paid staff.

29. The disabled had the right to choose whether to work in a normal environment or one with special equipment, but that right could not be exercised unless the question of persons to accompany them had been solved. In 1991, France would embark on an experiment by which some young people carrying out their military service would be allowed to act as escorts for handicapped people employed in

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(Mr. Gillibert, France)

normal working environments. Transport policy also determined the possibility of communication between the handicapped and the outside world. The Government of France had adopted a programme relating to transport for the disabled, which involved a commitment of 60 million francs a year for the land and air transport enterprises concerned.

30. All the countries of the world should work together in implementing a global policy for the disabled. During his travels in many parts of the world, he had been able to observe the causes of the success or stagnation of various policies. Exchanges of experts between two or more countries should be arranged in order to study the approach taken to the disabled in other countries. France had established bilateral working groups with Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Finland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and Tunisia to study such questions as the improvement of legislation relating to employment, allowances, medical research and industrial policy concerning equipment for the disabled. As the result of a visit paid recently to his office by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Romania, he himself would soon go to Romania with experts in various fields to help in the training of medical and paramedical personnel and in the establishment of urgently needed facilities. Following that trip and after a number of studies had been carried out, he would present a humanitarian plan for disabled children.

31. In November 1991, France would host a conference at which 23 Ministers of the Council of Europe would consider the subjects of job accessibility, equipment and information with regard to the disabled. The political will to bring about a revolution in respect of treatment of the disabled must also be mobilized in the third world. His Government was eager to launch a campaign of practical action in countries experiencing particular difficulties, especially with regard to the training of medical and paramedical staff. He appealed in particular to representatives of industrialized countries to recognize that the disabled in less fortunate countries did not have the specialists and technology to be found in the developed world. The industrialized countries had the duty of forming working groups for identifying disabled persons desiring to overcome their handicaps and for combating the injustices suffered by the innocent victims of disabilities.

32. Mr. LIU Xinsheng (China) said that the rich countries were growing richer while the poor ones were growing poorer. An enormous external debt and failed structural readjustments were among the problems that made social development in the developing countries more difficult than it was in the developed ones, and the international community must take measures to help the former, particularly by reducing their debt burden, so that they could deal with social development issues.

33. His delegation appreciated the positive role played by the United Nations in alleviating the plight of the disabled, most of whom had the additional disadvantage of living in developing countries and hence required special help. He drew attention to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 44/70 and said that China's own progress in providing the disabled with jobs, training, rehabilitation and education was in part due to its success in establishing national committees

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(Mr. Liu Xinsheng, China)

and organizations throughout the country. Another factor was government policy, which incorporated help for the disabled into the country's social and economic development strategy.

34. His delegation welcomed the work of the United Nations and its agencies in the field of aging, including progress in the development of regional training and research institutions. International efforts had heightened awareness of the problems of aging in individual countries and the world as a whole. China was prepared to increase its co-operation with the United Nations and other organizations and countries in that field. Domestically, China's policy was to enable retired persons to continue to contribute to society. Among the various priorities and recommendations put forward internationally, his delegation particularly supported those that gave priority to the participation of the aged in development and training and in the development of community services.

35. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Spain) said that while subscribing fully to the intervention made on behalf of the Twelve by the representative of Italy concerning the cluster of items relating to social development, his delegation wished to refer specifically to item 96, "Policies and programmes involving youth" and to the importance it attached to the work now under way regarding the integration of youth into society. His delegation was pleased to note that during its thirty-second session, the Commission for Social Development would give priority to the question of the integration of young people into society and that it had organized an international symposium on that subject in conjunction with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna. His delegation agreed with the other members of the Commission that the subject was of vital importance for all societies in both the developed and the developing world, and felt that the Commission needed to formulate practical recommendations in that respect.

36. His delegation was aware of the difficulties and obstacles which still persisted in connection with the achievement of the objectives of International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. That problem should be viewed from two aspects: the design of comprehensive youth policies at national level, and the strengthening or creation of national youth machinery. By comprehensive policies, he meant policies involving all social agents and giving cohesion to the activities of Governments in connection with youth. In such policies, attention should be paid to the youth component of every aspect of government activity, including support for autonomous and democratic young people's associations. The action called for would also include the creation of institutions dealing with youth as instruments for planning the integration of youth policies into national development plans. His delegation hoped that the questions he had raised would be taken into account by the Secretary-General in drafting his report on the application of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth (A/40/256, annex).



37. Ms. GEIL (Denmark) said that the young people of the world were growing impatient and wanted immediate action on vital issues such as the environment, human rights, world peace, the debt crisis, poverty and development in the least developed countries. They wanted real and not merely formal influence and were ready to accept the attendant responsibilities. At the local level, they were very concerned about environmental issues, and were the group that was most ready to change its living habits to improve the environment. At the national level, youth organizations all over the world urged their countries to become party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and encouraged its implementation, especially in the areas of health and education. The youth of the world hoped that the good intentions expressed at the World Summit for Children would be realized. At the international level, youth co-operation was promoting the human contact and understanding that were the basis for a peaceful world.

38. Young people wanted freedom and democracy and urged the international community to intensify pressure on countries that did not observe human rights. The welcome improvement in international relations unfortunately had not been accompanied by any reduction in the growing gap between the rich countries and the poor ones. The relative position of the least developed countries in particular, whose very number was increasing, was deteriorating, and young people were among those most affected by that situation.

39. Another area of young people's concern was the ecological deterioration of the planet, and developed countries had a special responsibility to show the necessary political will to solve environmental problems. Young people must be kept informed and encouraged to help save the environment. Youth must be involved in the solution of problems both locally and internationally and must participate in decision-making processes. Unfortunately, very little had been accomplished to ensure young people's participation at the United Nations, where only 3 of the 150 delegations to the General Assembly included youth delegates. Young people should participate in the preparation of United Nations youth policy and all countries should allow young people to be represented in their official delegations. Youth representation at the United Nations should be given priority and consultative status for non-governmental youth organizations should be reviewed.

40. Ms. GRES (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that natural and man-made disasters were among the factors that had often had destructive effects on the social structure of countries and regions. In the Byelorussian SSR, the social and other problems of her 11 million countrymen had to be understood in the light of the Chernobyl disaster, which affected not only her own region but, through unmanageable radioactive waste, other regions as well, and to an extent not yet fully understood. The biological effects of radiation on the human organism had produced a catastrophe comparable to AIDS. Families feared having children with birth defects and people were even afraid to go swimming or take a walk in the woods. Most parts of the country suffered from radioactive contamination but still had to grow agricultural products because the uncontaminated portion was too small. The result was a decline in the quality of food products and failure to decontaminate them fully. Thyroid disorders in children and adults threatened to

(Ms. Gres, Byelorussian SSR)

become a national tragedy. An increased incidence of leukemia and malignancies could also be expected. The problems of the aged had also been exacerbated by the disaster because many older people chose to return to the contaminated areas, where their grandchildren could not live, in order to die.

41. The Chernobyl disaster also had terrible psychological, economic and social consequences for young people, particularly those who had taken part in the clean-up operations afterwards. Many young people had sacrificed not only their health but even their lives to save the world from a nuclear catastrophe and many were now invalids with reduced life expectancies. She drew attention to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 44/70 and said that the fate of those young people must not be forgotten in complying with its provisions. The positive response of the world's ecologically conscious youth to Chernobyl reflected its commitment to international co-operation for a better world.

42. For four years her country had not asked for help, but it could no longer cope with the effects of the disaster - which had caused material damage equal to eight annual national budgets - and if the necessary steps were not taken immediately, millions more would suffer, resulting in an irreversible tragedy for all mankind.

43. Mr. SUMULONG (Philippines) expressed his delegation's satisfaction that the United Nations Office at Vienna was continuing to deal with social development issues in an integrated way. The supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137) was a reflection of the efforts being made within the United Nations system to develop a comprehensive approach. His delegation agreed that policy should focus not only on gross domestic product per capita but also on the humanization of development. To that end, it reiterated its support of efforts to strengthen the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

44. Noting that the cluster of items before the Committee were directed towards the disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups - youth, the aging and the disabled - he reminded the Committee of action it had initiated in the past in such areas as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, the International Plan of Action on Aging and the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. He expressed grave concern at reports that those endeavours had not been fully implemented.

45. His country's 1987 Constitution placed great emphasis on social justice, recognizing the vital role of youth and women in nation-building and making special provision for social justice and human rights. Concern for the welfare of disabled persons in the Philippines had begun in 1917 with the adoption of a revised administrative code. The 1987 Constitution had accelerated recognition of the plight of disabled Filipinos by providing for the establishment of a national committee for their welfare and for an education policy, special election procedures and free hospitalization for disabled persons. The Philippine development plan for the period 1988-1992 also addressed the needs of the disabled, providing for welfare programmes for them in 113 regions of the country, including services and workshops in the fields of self-reliance, human dignity, training and

(Mr. Sumulong, Philippines)

employment. Difficulties stemming from poor economic conditions, a lack of enabling laws, meagre resources for information campaigns and widespread apathy had, however, been encountered in the implementation of that policy. His delegation, therefore, attached great importance to the principal recommendations contained in the feasibility study on alternative ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/45/470) and would join other delegations in introducing a draft resolution on the need for action-oriented activities for the remaining years of the decade.

46. Young people comprised a large sector of the population of the Philippines. The fact that that sector had its own congressional representative had encouraged the adoption of legislation and programmes relating to youth. The Philippine Presidential Council for Youth Affairs had recently worked with other youth organizations to formulate a national youth development plan in accordance with United Nations guidelines. The Council functioned as the national co-ordinating committee for the International Youth Year. His country was fully committed to its obligations as a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

47. With regard to the aging, his country supported global efforts to implement the provisions of the International Plan of Action on Aging and the Philippine medium-term development plan made provision for appropriate privileges and benefits for the elderly. His country therefore supported the Action Programme on Aging for 1992 and Beyond, which, it believed, should have a catalytic effect on the implementation of the International Plan of Action.

48. The Philippines welcomed the proclamation of the International Year of the Family. In the Philippines the family was recognized as the foundation of the nation, and a new family code aimed at strengthening the family as the basic social institution and ensuring equality between men and women had been promulgated. The Philippines supported the establishment of national committees to prepare for the International Year of the Family; however, it felt that in local, regional and national activities, the focus should be on different individuals comprising the family, i.e., women, the elderly, youth, the disabled and children and on problems resulting from their interrelations. His delegation believed that the solution to many social problems lay in cohesive family foundations and pledged itself to support every effort of the international community to promote family welfare and solidarity.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS  
  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
14th meeting  
held on  
Monday, 22 October 1990  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

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- AGENDA ITEM 96: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued)
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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (A/45/137-E/1990/35)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued) (A/45/470)

AGENDA ITEM 96: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued) (A/45/225, A/45/227, A/45/280, A/45/338, A/45/422)

AGENDA ITEM 99: QUESTION OF AGING (continued) (A/45/207, A/45/420)

AGENDA ITEM 104: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (continued) (A/45/365; A/C.3/45/3)

1. Mr. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that as a young State, Yemen believed that the wealth of a nation derived from its ability to develop its human resources. Its accomplishments would not have been possible without the participation of the people working in conjunction with the State. Even with the limited technical and financial resources at its disposal, his Government had undertaken programmes and measures in order to allow the family to play a constructive role in the realization of cohesive economic and social development.

2. Youth constituted a great source of energy, and since its establishment, the United Nations had attached enormous attention to the young. The priority placed on youth had been repeatedly emphasized by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and an international consensus had been formed that further efforts should be made to encourage young people to take part in the social and economic development of their country and in the realization of international peace and security. Yemen had worked towards the objectives of the International Youth Year and had attached great importance to the youth sector with a view to harnessing the creative abilities of young people for the construction of society. Yemeni youth played a leading role in the political, economic and social life of the country.

3. His delegation had studied the report of the Secretary-General on aging (A/45/420), which was a social and humanitarian problem related to development. He drew attention to paragraph 9 (f) of that report in which ensuring community integration in old age by developing an appropriate mix of self-help opportunities, family and community support, and government assistance was identified as one of the challenges the problem of aging posed to Governments. Family support of the aged was one of the main principles underlying the approach taken by Yemeni society in implementation of the teachings of Islam. In Yemen each family was fully responsible for the welfare of its aged members who remained within their family until they died.

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(Mr. Al-Hamami, Yemen)

4. The problem of the disabled constituted a human burden shared by all countries, particularly the developing countries. It would be a mistake to ignore the danger of wasting the potential offered by disabled persons by not allowing them to play an effective role in society.

5. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) noted that was essential to make further efforts towards the achievement of full participation and equality for the 500 million disabled people in the world. With regard to the agenda for action from 1990 to 1992, he said that although Member States were invited to ratify some specific international legal instruments directly related to disability, their ratification was in fact a matter to be decided by the Government of each Member State. Second, the regional commissions were requested to establish or strengthen units on disability within their Social Development Division, but it must be understood that the cost of those units should be absorbed within the existing United Nations budget. Regarding the preliminary outline of a long-term strategy, it was suggested in the report of the expert meeting, that a global conference to draw up a convention on the rights of disabled people should be organized not later than the year 2000. It was also suggested that the regional commissions should be encouraged to hold regional conferences with a view to preparing regional conventions. Such suggestions should be studied further and carefully, and the views of Member States should be taken into account. Japan was striving to accommodate the aim of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons and was also committed to the idea that disabled persons should enjoy full participation and equal rights. It was co-operating actively with developing countries by extending technical assistance for that purpose. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, to which Japan had contributed a total of \$US 400,000 from 1980 to 1989 and was planning another contribution for 1990, had played an important role in supporting activities in implementation of the World Programme of Action.

6. The full and active participation of young people in society was clearly crucial to the peace and development of all mankind. He drew attention to the activities carried out by the Japan Overseas Co-operation Volunteers Plan, which was an integral part of the Japan International Co-operation Agency. Under the Plan, young men and women were dispatched to developing countries to offer their knowledge and technical skills for the benefit of others. He urged Member States to maintain the momentum they had built up during the International Youth Year in 1985.

7. Questions concerning the elderly also required attention because the effects of the trend towards older populations were particularly serious for developing countries, as shown in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/420). His delegation regretted that the document had not been distributed in time to allow for the study it deserved. The activities outlined in the programme for 1992 regarding the further implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging on the tenth anniversary of its adoption and should be fully studied in the capital of each Member State.

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(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

8. The family was a basic social unit whose importance to the healthy development of children could not be over-emphasized. The proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family would make a great contribution to family welfare. He noted that according to document A/45/365, the draft programme under preparation by the Secretariat would be submitted through the Commission for Social Development to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. His delegation hoped that the preparations for and implementation of the International Year of the Family would be both effective and efficient and that full account would be taken of its system-wide budgetary implications. He also wished to note the usefulness of the report of the Expert Meeting on the Negative Consequences of Alcohol use held at Oslo in August 1990 (A/C.3/45/3).

9. With regard to the world social situation, he noted that while the report submitted by the Secretary-General every three years had been intended to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the world social situation, problems had arisen which had left the overall accuracy and objectivity of the reports open to question and urged that great care should be taken in that regard in the preparation of future reports.

10. Ms. PELLICER (Mexico), after remarking on the late distribution of the documents under review, said the 1990s had begun in a spirit of frustration because of the stagnation in social progress inherited from the 1980s, but also in a spirit of hope because thinking with regard to development was undergoing a real revolution. The need for the structural adjustment programmes embarked upon to that end was no longer under discussion, but their social cost was a matter for concern. Data on social conditions and the possibility of their worsening had made the world social situation a focus of debate. The main challenges for the 1990s were to reconcile the contradiction between social adjustment and social cost, to halt the deterioration in standards of living and to restore growth in order to achieve social progress for all. Without such progress, it would be difficult to achieve the objectives of the Third Committee.

11. The magnitude of the task of achieving social progress was illustrated by the fact that more than one billion people were living in absolute poverty and close to 900 million adults were illiterate, while another billion people did not have access to drinking water. At the recent World Summit for Children, it had emerged that 150 million children under five years of age suffered from malnutrition and that 14 million children died before their fifth birthday. Of the large number of measures proposed for overcoming those problems, some required an internal effort by countries, while others called for international action. All of them came up against two obstacles. The first was insufficient understanding of the origin of social problems, the relationship between them and the actions and methods needed to solve them. Second, the political will needed to put an end to the social inequality within countries was lacking.

12. The preceding year, her delegation had noted that the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation did not provide a means of identifying general trends in the main social indicators and of viewing specific problems in a larger context. It had

(Ms. Pellicer, Mexico)

gone on record as favouring the preparation of a supplement which would give priority to an analysis of the main indicators of social progress and standards of living and would consider the reasons for their negative performance in recent years. She thanked the Secretary-General for the supplement to the 1989 report (A/45/137), which had been prepared along the lines indicated in General Assembly resolution 44/56. Her delegation was pleased to note that a preliminary report on the work done within the United Nations to improve social indicators would be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration the following year.

13. Referring to some specific social problems experienced throughout the world, she noted that 1995 would mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. An appraisal of the progress achieved in the intervening years was not optimistic. Most developing countries had still not achieved the full integration of youth into their political, economic and social life. The momentum achieved during International Youth Year had not been maintained, and new impetus was needed if real achievements were to be made by 1995. Her delegation supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/422) and also endorsed the preparations for the programme of action to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the year.

14. The world community should prepare itself for confronting the problem of aging, bearing in mind that the elderly should play an active role in the economic and social life of their country. Her delegation supported the report of the Secretary-General prepared in that connection (A/45/420) and his proposals for an action programme on aging for 1992 and beyond to serve as a catalyst for further implementation of the International Plan on Aging. The global calendar of events on aging during the period 1991-1992 also seemed very useful.

15. Her delegation attached great importance to the celebration of the International Year of the Family and was pleased to note the designation of the Director of the Social Development Division of the United Nations Office at Vienna as Co-ordinator for the Year.

16. Ms. MAQBOOL (Pakistan) said that, since she was herself disabled, her presence was indicative of her Government's desire to include disabled persons in its delegation, and of the self-advocacy of disabled persons who wished to work for their own advancement. Pakistan had formulated a national policy for the disabled at the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. It had also established a new division of its Ministry of Health for special education and social welfare. Since the beginning of the Decade, the Pakistan Government had collaborated with United Nations specialized agencies on the prevention and early detection of disabilities. A broad programme of child immunization had been implemented, and diagnostic centres had been set up in hospitals. Her Government had also worked with non-governmental organizations to broaden the public's awareness of the situation of disabled persons through the press and the electronic media, with recognizable results. Television had been utilized as a community outreach medium to disseminate information about disabilities and their prevention, and about the care and welfare of disabled persons. As a disabled person, she participated in that process by acting as a media adviser.



(Ms. Magbool, Pakistan)

17. Pakistan had taken another positive step by establishing educational and training facilities for disabled children. The new special education centres had increased the need for qualified teachers, so special training programmes for the teaching of disabled persons had been introduced. To date, thousands of teachers had been trained in such programmes. In addition, Pakistan had provided disabled persons with increased access to vocational training, so that they could find skilled employment and thereby enhance their independence. In order to broaden employment opportunities for the disabled, a 1 per cent quota of disabled persons had been established for all employment sectors.

18. Pakistan had made special efforts to address the needs of women with disabilities by integrating those needs into its national policies for the advancement of women. Pakistan had increased its support of the activities of non-governmental organizations by collaborating with them and assisting them financially. Her delegation suggested that the United Nations should follow Pakistan's example by considering the inclusion of an item in its budget to fund organizations and projects for disabled persons.

19. Miss JUNEJO (Pakistan) said that the supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation demonstrated that social progress was inseparable from economic progress. More than 20 years after the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, social conditions in many developing countries still left much to be desired. The stagnation or the decline of the economies of many developing countries in the 1980s had been marked by negative resource flows, trade barriers, crushing debt burden and high interest rates. The structural adjustment policies undertaken by developing countries had often meant sacrificing health, literacy, housing and the eradication of poverty for the sake of economic development. However, the recent World Summit for Children was a reminder of the international community's responsibility to its posterity. The international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade addressed the essential linkage between economic and social development for the improvement of the human condition, and was therefore a promising mechanism of change.

20. The Secretary-General's recommendations on the implementation of various youth programmes and activities based on the themes of participation, development and peace, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions, were worthy of favourable consideration. Pakistan's youth policy was part of its national planning framework, and was intended to improve the educational and employment situation of young people, to enable them to assume a leadership role in the future. Her delegation also supported international efforts to ameliorate the social and economic conditions of the world's aging population. Pakistan had adopted its own plan of action for the aging to enable them to enjoy fulfilling, healthy, secure lives in their families and communities. That plan, involving both governmental and non-governmental organizations, included financial assistance to families of the elderly for health care costs, preparation for aging through a mass media campaign, introduction of the subject of geriatrics in medical education, and institutional care of the elderly.

21. Mr. OULD MOHAMED MAHMOUD (Mauritania) said that the most complex social problems facing the countries of the world were those involving youth. The General Assembly's 1965 Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples had recognized the idealistic nature of young people and their importance as the hope of the world. Currently, young people were in the forefront of movements for social and political change. Through their efforts to bring about reforms based on noble ideals such as freedom, peace, justice and the defence of the environment, young people had set an example of courage and commitment in the face of brute force, notably in South Africa, in Palestine and in all occupied territories.

22. The search for concrete, effective and speedy ways to prepare young people for their future responsibilities was one of the great challenges currently facing the world. The observance of International Youth Year in 1985 had led many countries to renew their commitment to young people, and the recent World Summit for Children had given the necessary priority to the problems of children. However, those new commitments must be followed by concrete action. The abatement of ideological confrontation in the international community offered opportunities for greater attention to the problems of youth. Examples of international co-operation in that area on a regional basis included the co-operation among the States of the Arab Maghreb Union for the protection and education of children, as well as the participation of Tunisia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Algeria and Mauritania in Arab and pan-African youth festivals.

23. The economic difficulties of the 1980s had had a profound effect on the most vulnerable segments of society including youth, and the degradation of the environment was threatening the future of young people. Decreasing attention to the problems of youth was to blame for the prevalence of juvenile delinquency, drugs and crime in developing countries (as a result of weakened family and governmental structures, and the failure to take advantage of resources) and in industrialized countries (as a result of waning religious faith, increasing egocentricity and widespread unemployment). Governments had halted their development of an extra-curricular socio-educative infrastructure (community youth programmes, vacation centres, etc.), and the constructive participation of youth in society had therefore decreased. The organization of youth activities had declined since the 1980 United Nations World Youth Assembly. The abandonment of young people to the temptations of consumerism had left them without models to emulate, and had eroded their naturally strong sense of morality. The world was therefore losing a valuable moral resource that represented the ideals on which social and economic policies must be based.

24. Since young people were the world's most precious capital, it was time to sound the alarm for the problems of youth. The Third Committee should suggest ideas for youth policies to member States, to nurture the mind and conscience of the world's youth. It would also be appropriate for the United Nations to hold a second World Youth Assembly.

25. Mrs. ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that because the United Nations had established standards of decent treatment for several groups in society, such as women, disabled persons and children, it should also adopt a declaration on the rights of the elderly. Like the aforementioned social groups, the elderly were particularly vulnerable to discrimination in employment, physical abuse, poverty and the devaluation of their dignity.

26. It could not be argued that such a declaration was unnecessary because the elderly were already protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, since other social groups had already been deemed worthy of special recognition. Their numbers were increasing so quickly that, in the foreseeable future, the elderly would outnumber infants two to one. It was also unreasonable to assume that the right of the elderly to work was detrimental to the employment situation of young people, since the exclusion of skilled, experienced workers from the labour force would lower productivity, thereby damaging the interests of all people in any economy. The practice of forced retirement also lowered the worker/dependent ratio, creating difficulties for younger workers who must pay taxes to fund retirement benefits. In many poor developing countries, where social security benefits were not available, depriving the elderly of the right to work often had lethal consequences.

27. The United Nations had the responsibility to foresee and act upon the implications of future trends, including those suggested by its own statistics on aging. The growing number of people over 60 presented specific political, social and economic problems that affected the relationship between generations. The place of the elderly in all societies was changing or was about to change; therefore, a United Nations declaration on the rights of the elderly was more urgent than ever.

28. Mr. CENKO (Albania) said that although in some ways there had been improvements over the past year, the economic and social situation of the developing countries had worsened and the gap between those countries and the industrialized countries had widened. It was generally agreed that old methods could not resolve the current international problems.

29. Albania, having emerged from its state of backwardness, was progressing on its chosen path of economic development, determined to build a life of well-being for its people. It was currently engaged in a new phase of development, calling for the highest possible productivity from its material and human resources. That required modern technology, educated and experienced personnel, the promotion of initiative, good social relations and strengthening and expansion of co-operation with the rest of the world.

30. Albania was a young and inexperienced society - about 70 per cent of its population was below the age of 30. It was undergoing changes, such as the distribution of land and cattle to the peasants, the establishment of a private sector for services and craft workers, foreign investment, and the creation of joint enterprises, all of which brought new problems. The first priority was to revitalize the role of the social organizations, with a view to finding just solutions for existing and new social problems.



(Mr. Cenko, Albania)

31. In connection with agenda item 96, Albania set great store by its young people, who were playing their part in democratization and in strengthening public opinion. They realized that progress required hard work, discipline, knowledge and skills and that as democracy grew, standards of life would improve. They were encouraged to be in the forefront and to show initiative and determination. It was also recognized that the needs of young people must be met and that they must be given access to all spheres of life, including decision-making and contacts with the outside world.

32. Regarding agenda item 92, Albania recognized that sustained and harmonious economic and social development required the active participation of the whole population, including disabled people. It supported the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and, as far as its means would permit, had taken various measures to promote the integration of disabled people in various sectors of active life. A determined effort was required to improve the situation of disabled people, as well as the support of the international community, in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Such assistance was urgently required in the developing countries, where the situation was deteriorating.

33. Albania also supported the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in the field of aging. Regarding the International Year of the Family, Albania attached particular importance to protecting and strengthening the family as the basic unit of society.

34. Mr. HODNE (Norway) said that, with democracy and international responsibility for the earth at the top of the world's political agenda, it was possible, for the first time in history, to deal effectively, through the United Nations, with the serious threats to mankind's existence. Action, or failure to act, today would decide the living conditions for people tomorrow. Unless action was taken now to slow down population growth, attack poverty and protect the environment, future generations would inherit a dying earth. Vast resources could be saved through disarmament and used to promote the development of a sustainable society. Young people had led demands for environmental protection and would have to live with the consequences of political decisions made today. It was important, therefore, that youth organizations should participate in the preparations for the Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992.

35. A recent conference for youth organizations in the European Community region, held in Bergen earlier in the present year, had stated that the industrial countries of the European Community must assume a leading role in action to create a sustainable society. Norway believed that Governments should adopt, through the United Nations system, an environmental charter to include a set of rights providing for the public, on a well-informed basis, to make decisions on environmental questions. All people must have the right to receive full information on the environmental implications of products and services. Sustainable development depended on action across national borders to save a common environment, which in turn depended on understanding and knowledge and hence on

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(Mr. Hodne, Norway)

education about the environment and the dangers of ecological crisis. Only the rule of law could secure a sustainable global society, and the United Nations Decade of International Law (1990-1999) should help to strengthen international institutions and legal instruments, as the most efficient way of enforcing the action needed to avoid an environmental disaster.

36. There were two preconditions for securing a sustainable environment. First, the industrialized countries must help the developing countries to obtain stable sources of income, to ensure the efficient use of resources and a fair distribution of wealth. That meant a drastic change in the lifestyle and pattern of consumption in the developed countries. Secondly, population growth in the developing countries must be controlled. Youth organizations had a responsibility in creating awareness of the need for those changes, in order to avoid tensions and develop new attitudes. Most industrialized countries neglected their commitment to devote 0.15 per cent of their GNP to the least developed countries.

37. Young people had an important part to play in democracy, although in many countries they were still not fully integrated in the decision-making process, and were even denied the right to organize. Youth organizations were good schools for democracy, instilling in young people political awareness, tolerance, respect for other people's opinions and an interest in public life. In order to safeguard new democracies it was important to facilitate exchanges between youth organizations in different countries. Communication within the United Nations framework was important and greater participation of youth organizations in the United Nations system was essential. For many years, the Norwegian delegation to the United Nations had included two youth delegates, and as a representative of Norwegian youth, he appreciated the opportunity to participate in the General Assembly. Only three delegations at the present session - Denmark, Netherlands and Norway - included youth delegates and those delegates had therefore sent a letter on the subject to all delegations in the Committee. He hoped that more Governments would include youth delegates in the future.

38. Millions of young people in both industrialized and developing countries lacked jobs and educational opportunities and thus felt that society did not need them. It was essential to build up educational structures in developing countries, minimize youth unemployment and protest against the closing of schools and universities for political reasons.

39. It was important for young people to be given the opportunity to take part in international youth exchanges, since international contacts fostered mutual respect, cultural understanding and solidarity between peoples of different race, colour and national origin and thus countered the ignorance, fear and mistrust that led to ethnic conflicts. Contacts between cultures were the best weapons against xenophobia.

40. Mr. Al-JABER (Qatar) said that his Government attached great importance to the younger generations and depended on them for the achievement of its objectives. It had established a Council for Youth Affairs in 1979, under the chairmanship of

(Mr. Al-Jaber, Qatar)

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, whose activities included training in co-operation, solidarity and leadership and providing facilities for hosting students from other countries. It also provided social, cultural and sports facilities, and fostered activities in the arts, theatre and music. The Qatar Olympic Committee had participated in international and regional meetings, including meetings of the International Olympic Committee.

41. Qatar was interested in all matters concerning young people, its aim being to bring up a generation of vigilant and responsible young people, who would be useful to society both nationally and internationally. His country followed and greatly appreciated the activities of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna and looked forward to co-operating in the activities for the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year.

42. His country was deeply concerned about the problem of drug addiction and stressed the vital need for international co-operation and monitoring. His Government fully supported all the plans put forward by different authorities within the United Nations framework to encourage young people to tackle the problems and face up to the various difficulties that hampered development, so that they could play an active part in their own and in international society.

43. Mr. SAVLE (Yugoslavia) said that, despite the recent improvement in the political climate, there were still serious problems. Development in the 1990s must be a different kind from past development, to ensure a decade of world progress, and to that end Governments must adopt effective national policies as a creative response to the changing world economy. The measures and policies adopted by the Yugoslav Government in the past year, aimed at transforming the country into a modern, market-oriented and fully democratic society, had already shown remarkable results.

44. His delegation had noted with interest the report on policies and programmes involving young people (A/45/422) and supported the efforts to promote the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding among youth, as well as student and youth exchanges and information activities. Yugoslavia had already started activities in connection with the International Year of the Family and welcomed the designation of Mr. Henryk Sokalski, Director of the Social Development Division of the United Nations Office at Vienna, as co-ordinator. His country agreed with the notion of the family as a relatively independent unit and social group with an active and responsible role in society, but thought that more attention should be paid to the impact of social crises and sudden social changes on relations within the family. Attention should also be paid to the relationship between the family and the various social groups surrounding it which could play an important role and help official institutions responsible for social care and protection of the family.

45. With regard to the report on the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/45/470), his delegation agreed that disabled persons must be enabled to become active, contributing participants in the social and economic development of their communities, and that they represented a great human resource potential. His

(Mr. Savle, Yugoslavia)

delegation attached great importance to the recommendations on improving opportunities for and the status of disabled persons nationally, and supported the proposed steps for revitalizing the Decade.

46. Regarding the report on the Question of Aging (A/45/420), he agreed with the view that the active older population represented a development force and supported the practical recommendations in that connection.

47. Lastly, he informed members of the Committee that preparations were under way for establishing a research and training institute in Belgrade, which he hoped would soon be available for use by the United Nations.

48. Miss TURUPHIAL (Venezuela) said that the economic and social aspects of development were inseparable and stressed the need for a solid social base in order to bring about true economic progress. In response to the basic economic changes resulting from the foreign debt crisis, the Venezuelan Government had undertaken a series of measures to protect the most vulnerable social groups, focusing attention on three high-priority areas: nutrition, health and education. Almost half of the national budget for 1991 had been allocated for that purpose. Determined to restore social services to the level preceding the crisis of the 1980s, her country had implemented a number of social programmes aimed at mitigating the impact of economic adjustment policies.

49. Venezuela was committed to enabling disabled persons adapt to their immediate social environment and participate in development activities. A number of programmes were being carried out at the national level to meet the basic needs of that sector of the population. One such programme provided the children of disabled persons with scholarships for higher education. A recently conducted national population census would make it possible to determine the number of disabled persons in the overall population and their immediate needs in order to reorient national policies in that field.

50. With regard to ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, her delegation supported the idea of convening a ministerial-level world conference in 1993. In order to improve the status of disabled persons in developing countries, Venezuela agreed that it was necessary to integrate specific components that addressed the needs of disabled persons into social and economic programmes within the context of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. It also supported the general considerations relating to a long-term strategy to the year 2000 and beyond. Her delegation reiterated its commitment to the concept of the family as a basic unit of society. Venezuela had supported the proposal to proclaim 1994 the International Year of the Family. The organizational measures set forth in the note by the Secretary-General in that regard (A/45/365) were very useful.

51. Mr. RODIONOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) stressed the need for effective ways to provide social protection, improve living standards and find optimum solutions to problems impeding stable development. The social component of



(Mr. Rodionov, Ukrainian SSR)

United Nations activities must be strengthened in order to combine bilateral and multilateral efforts in tackling those problems. Increasing the role of the Economic and Social Council in that field, inter alia through the holding of ministerial-level conferences, offered interesting possibilities.

52. The Ukrainian SSR supported the basic recommendations in the feasibility study on alternative ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/45/470). The anniversary programme for 1992 in the report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/45/420) was very important as a catalyst for continued implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging. His delegation also supported efforts to strengthen the position of the family and its role in the development process, including preparations for the International Year of the Family.

53. In recent years it had become clear in the Ukrainian SSR that without qualitative changes in social policies it would be impossible to achieve the goals of perestroika. Unfortunately, measures taken to increase productivity and ensure adherence to the principle of social justice had not improved the living standard of the Ukrainian people. Serious economic and social problems were cause for concern. Practical steps taken to increase pensions for the disabled and the elderly, allowances for temporary disablement, assistance to families, and the salaries of teachers, medical workers and other civil servants had been largely undermined by inflation. The possibility of unemployment and the need to change one's type and place of employment because of the transition to a market economy had caused alarm.

54. The crisis in the social and economic field was further aggravated by environmental problems. The entire territory of the Ukrainian SSR had been declared an ecological disaster area as a result of the Chernobyl accident. Today, approximately 1.8 million citizens of the Republic were exposed to direct atomic radiation. The international community had provided large-scale assistance to help cope with the effects of the disaster. Medical institutions, social organizations and business circles in a number of countries had sent hundreds of tons of medicine, foodstuffs and equipment for the benefit of children in the Ukrainian SSR. The United Nations and its specialized agencies played an important role in organizing international co-operation to overcome the effects of the Chernobyl accident. Resolution 1990/50 of the Economic and Social Council on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant demonstrated the support and concern of the international community.

55. At the current time, the Ukrainian SSR was taking measures to bring about concrete improvements in living conditions. A decision had been taken to close down the Chernobyl nuclear power station and a moratorium had been declared on the construction of new nuclear power stations. The declaration of sovereignty adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament would enable the Republic to increase its participation in international life at a level commensurate with its political, economic and cultural potential. The Ukrainian SSR attached great importance to the

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(Mr. Rodionov, Ukrainian SSR)

establishment and development of mutually advantageous equitable relations with European and other countries that were prepared to co-operate.

56. The recently adopted law on the economic independence of the Ukrainian SSR guaranteed legal protection for all forms of ownership and provided various possibilities for developing all forms of entrepreneurial activity. At the same time, the Ukrainian SSR considered it extremely important to observe the principle of social justice and ensure social protection for the most vulnerable groups of the population - children and young people, the disabled, the elderly, the unemployed and the needy. In accordance with its desire to promote stability on the basis of balanced economic development and social justice, his delegation would submit a draft resolution on achieving social justice and was prepared to co-operate with all delegations interested in discussing that text.

57. Ms. LISSIDINI (Uruguay) said that, although the international climate had significantly improved, the increasing gap between developed and developing countries had aggravated the economic situation in the developing world, particularly in Africa and Latin America. The slump in the prices of raw materials and the difficulties experienced by developing countries in exporting their products had considerably increased poverty in the world, which, in the case of Latin America, affected 183 million people or 44 per cent of the population.

58. Eighty per cent of the disabled persons in the world lived in developing countries. External assistance was necessary in order to compensate for reductions in social programmes resulting from the foreign debt burden in order to reach the goals set for the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Uruguay attached great importance to the question of the disabled and had recently established a system to provide overall protection to disabled persons in the field of medical care, education, rehabilitation and social security in order to enable them to function in society on an equal footing with others. The objective was to ensure equality of opportunity to disabled persons so that they could participate fully in all aspects of economic and social life. Her Government had set up a national committee for disabled persons made up of representatives of government agencies and organizations for the disabled in order to draw up, evaluate and implement at the national level measures to promote the development, rehabilitation and social integration of disabled persons.

59. In view of the growing numbers of elderly persons in the world, there was an urgent need to ensure their broader participation in the development process and enable them to live independent lives. In Uruguay, an interministerial commission dealt with policies relating to the elderly in accordance with the International Plan of Action on Aging. Her delegation attached great importance to the technical assistance provided by the United Nations Youth Fund and expressed regret that limited resources impeded its work. In Uruguay, a special committee co-ordinated efforts to deal with problems affecting young people. At the current time, it was considering various projects aimed at, inter alia, improving the formal training of young people to facilitate their access to employment and providing a minimum income to young people from poor families during training.

(Ms. Lissidini, Uruguay)

60. Uruguay firmly supported the proclamation of the International Year of the Family, which should increase awareness of questions relating to the family as the basic unit of society. Her delegation attached particular importance to measures to improve protection for low-income families, including the construction of housing and the promotion of small-scale family businesses in order to reduce unemployment among young people. Such projects would require technical and financial assistance.

61. Mr. PULZ (Czechoslovakia) stressed the need for joint action by the entire international community in tackling serious social problems. The United Nations had a vital role to play in co-ordinating international action to deal with such problems as malnutrition, hunger, illiteracy, substandard housing, unemployment and pollution. The supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137) confirmed the fact that the situation was serious. He agreed that the economic and social dimensions of development were inseparable and that economic progress was impossible without a solid social base. Fundamental changes had taken place in Czechoslovakia's political and public life. The new Government sought to ensure that the adverse impact of such changes were minimized and was developing a new system of social security to enable all citizens to care for themselves and at the same time to guarantee a minimum living standard for all.

62. The International Year of the Family would help focus greater attention on questions relating to the family. The organizational arrangements undertaken by the Secretariat in preparation for the Year were commendable. His delegation supported the recommendation put forward at the Expert Meeting on the Negative Consequences of Alcohol Use held in August in Oslo to incorporate alcohol-use related themes in the preparatory work of the Year. The International Plan of Action on Aging promoted better understanding of the problems of the aged and ways to solve them. The measures set forth in the report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/45/420) should be given careful consideration. In dealing with the problems of the elderly it was necessary to enable them to continue to participate, as much as possible, in economic, social and public activities. Attention should also be given to care for the aged by the State and society.

63. Much still had to be done to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Although there was greater awareness of the problems of disabled persons, further efforts were needed to integrate them fully in society. The feasibility study on alternative ways to mark the end of the Decade (A/45/470) provided useful material for considering the problems of disabled persons. Czechoslovakia shared the view that a ministerial-level world conference should be convened to adopt a long-term strategy in that regard. The mentally handicapped constituted a special group of disabled persons and should be regarded as a specific vulnerable social group. He supported the authorization by the Economic and Social Council, under resolution 1990/37, of the Commission on Human Rights to continue its work on a draft body of principles and guarantees for the protection of the mentally ill persons and for the improvement of mental health care.

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(Mr. Pulz, Czechoslovakia)

64. The potential of youth must be taken into account in both national and international development strategies. The tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year presented a suitable occasion for focusing global attention again on youth issues. Preparatory work should begin on a draft programme of action to mark the tenth anniversary of the Year and on a draft world youth programme of action to the year 2000 and beyond.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
15th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 23 October 1990  
at 10 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe)  
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Zindoga (Zimbabwe),  
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (A/45/137-E/1990/35)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING  
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued)  
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AGENDA ITEM 96: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued) (A/45/225,  
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AGENDA ITEM 99: QUESTION OF AGING (continued) (A/45/207 and 420)

AGENDA ITEM 104: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (continued) (A/45/365;  
A/C.3/45/3)

1. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey), referring to agenda item 90, spoke of the crisis which, to varying degrees, was affecting all societies owing to rapid population growth, sometimes uncontrolled urbanization, the neglect of social problems in favour of economic expansion, and the imbalance in the distribution of resources. Turkey, in the midst of social change and urbanization, was endeavouring to resolve its social problems and develop its human resources, taking into account the social aspect of growth.

2. Turning to agenda item 96, he indicated the measures taken by his Government on behalf of young people, who comprised more than 20 per cent of a population of 57 million. Out-of-school education programmes for young people, vocational training and self-employment programmes were under way. The sixth five-year plan (1990-1994) included activities to encourage young people to play an active part in the everyday life of the country, as well as measures to protect against such scourges as drug abuse, delinquency and AIDS. His delegation welcomed the recommendations contained in document A/45/422 and noted that Turkey was among the 24 countries which had submitted information to the Secretary-General on their activities to implement the guidelines and integrate young people into social and professional life.

3. With reference to agenda item 104, he recalled the role of the family, which was the repository of human and moral values and of cultural identity, the keystone of social solidarity and a barrier against any worsening of social problems. His Government had also replied to the request from the Secretary-General concerning the preparation of a draft programme for the International Year of the Family.

4. Turning to agenda item 99, he noted with interest the 1992 programme of activities on aging, contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/420). The problem of aging had also begun to affect Turkish society, in which the elderly

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had always enjoyed a highly respected status. There was now greater national awareness of the problem and consciousness-raising campaigns were being conducted. At the same time health services and rehabilitation centres were being organized and special concessions for the elderly in various areas were planned.

5. Moving on to agenda item 92, he described the measures taken under the sixth five-year plan for the disabled. The plan involved integrating people with disabilities into everyday life and society in all its aspects, helping them to be less dependent and making life easier for them. In order to promote equal opportunities, Turkish legislation required companies to hire the disabled, for whom there was a special employment service in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The disabled were granted tax exemptions and the National Council for the Disabled was consulted in formulating and implementing relevant programmes. In addition, there was an increasing number of disabled young people in Turkey who attended university and thus had access to better jobs. Turkey endorsed the recommendations of the feasibility study on alternative ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/470). His country had hopes that the Organization could make a contribution to resolving social problems by mobilizing international co-operation for that purpose.

6. Ms. SEMAFUMU (Uganda), with reference to agenda item 90, recalled the adoption by the General Assembly, two decades earlier, of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, and the tremendous social progress which had taken place since then in some parts of the world, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/137-E/1990/35). Unfortunately, the report confirmed an alarming deterioration in standards of living in many developing countries, attributable to the interconnected nature of economic and social problems. The collapse of commodity prices, the deterioration in the terms of trade, high interest rates and the debt burden had undermined the ability of developing countries to invest sufficient resources in such areas as health, education, sanitation and water supply. Unable to profit from the potential of their human resources to promote economic growth, developing countries had, on the contrary, suffered a continuing loss of the skills and the human resources needed for their social and economic development. In addition, in a bid to reduce their budget deficits, they had had to adopt a number of austerity measures which had prevented them from expanding their meagre social infrastructures. On the threshold of the twenty-first century, prospects remained bleak for the billion people living in absolute poverty throughout the world.

7. Her delegation commended the efforts made by the international community to promote social development. In acknowledging the importance of national efforts in that regard, Uganda underscored the need to strengthen international co-operation. In order to attain the goal of universal social progress, the international community must seriously address the economic crisis faced by developing countries, essentially by establishing more equitable terms of trade, substantially easing the debt burden, increasing resource flows to developing countries and providing genuine assistance in key areas of national economies. In that connection, her

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delegation took note of compensatory arrangements such as those established under the Lomé IV convention and the Swiss compensatory financing scheme. She hoped that the fourth United Nations international development strategy would also have a positive effect on the world's socio-economic situation.

8. Notwithstanding those difficulties, Uganda had made some gains in its efforts to provide its citizens with basic social services. The Government had emphasized the modernization of hospitals and health centres, the training of health personnel, the control of epidemics and infectious diseases and the improvement of maternal and child health care. The expanded programme of immunization implemented in Uganda in co-operation with UNICEF had reduced infant mortality from 114 per 1,000 in 1985 to 101 per 1,000 in 1989. A modernized blood bank had been opened the year before in Kampala and similar centres were planned at the regional level.

9. Her delegation welcomed the assistance of the international community, from which Uganda had secured \$US 160 million in loans and grants for the improvement of the water system nation-wide. Two projects had made it possible to supply safe water and install sewerage systems in urban areas. As only 20 per cent of the rural population had access to drinking water, a programme had been undertaken in all districts of Uganda in order to improve the situation in that area.

10. Referring to agenda item 96, she took note of the encouraging report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the guidelines for suitable follow-up of the International Youth Year, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/14 of November 1985, and the recommendations contained therein. While youth issues remained on the agenda of various United Nations bodies in the early 1990s, the report of the Secretary-General observed a declining interest in youth concerns at the regional and international levels. It was to be hoped that the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year would once again focus attention on a question of major interest. Aware of the need to integrate youth policies in national development and to enhance communication between youth and the Government, Uganda ensured youth participation in the decision-making process. One of the nine members of the Committees of Resistance Councils was a Youth Secretary. In the national Parliament, a seat was reserved for an elected representative of the youth movements.

11. Referring to agenda item 92, she said that her delegation welcomed the international community's activities for disabled persons, especially the activities of the developed countries and non-governmental organizations. Unfortunately, disabled persons in developing countries were subjected to the effects of disabled economies. Her delegation hoped for intensified international co-operation in order to supplement national efforts to alleviate the plight of the disabled in developing countries. It wished to thank various non-governmental organizations, such as the Norwegian Association of the Disabled, the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, the Christoffel Blinden Mission and Danida Papsca, which had greatly assisted the various services for the disabled in Uganda.

12. Concerning agenda item 104, her delegation underscored the importance of the family as the basic political, economic and social unit, and noted with



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satisfaction the arrangements undertaken thus far in order to implement General Assembly resolution 44/82, proclaiming 1994 as the International Year of the Family. It supported, in particular, the proposals by Mr. Sokalski, Director of the Social Development Division regarding the establishment of national co-ordinating committees and a voluntary fund that would provide technical assistance, particularly to least developed countries.

13. Concerning agenda item 99, her delegation took note of the draft "action programme on aging for 1992 and beyond". In Africa, it was traditionally each family's responsibility to care for the elderly, who, because of their experience, were respected by society. However, the changing structure of the family unit as a result of modernization, economic crises and military conflicts, tended to relegate senior citizens to a secondary position. And yet, developing countries must find practical ways of helping the elderly to lead meaningful, dignified and independent lives.

14. Her delegation wished to reaffirm the need for an international economic environment conducive to sustained economic growth. While economic growth did not systematically lead to social progress, economic stagnation made it virtually impossible. Her delegation therefore welcomed the strengthening of the United Nations Office at Vienna which should none the less take place within the overall context of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors. For that reason, it looked forward to the reports of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the Office and the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council.

15. Mr. BROWNHILL (Australia) said that social justice - whether it concerned disabled persons, the aged or youth - was the common theme of the cluster of agenda items under consideration. It was clearly incumbent on the United Nations to encourage all its Member States to ensure that justice prevailed in their own societies.

16. Referring mainly to agenda item 92, he reiterated that over the 10 years since the International Year of Disabled Persons had been proclaimed, Australia had taken several initiatives in order to translate its objectives - full participation and equality - into reality at all levels of society. In 1984, the Government had asked disabled persons and their families about their aspirations. Their answer had been simple: a job, a home and a chance to live an ordinary life, just like everyone else. To that end, the Disability Service Act had been adopted in 1986. The Act applied the major principles of the Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons particularly the principle of equal opportunities. In the current phase, services and programmes funded by the federal Government must be introduced in order to improve the lot of such persons, particularly by ensuring them greater independence, employment opportunities and integration into the community.

17. Over the past decade, Australia had achieved the following results, which it believed were in conformity with the goals and principles of the World Programme of Action: the establishment, at the federal and state levels, of advisory bodies made up of consumers with disabilities, parents of disabled children, and



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representatives of providers of services; the establishment of technical aids and appliance programmes administered by states and funded jointly by the state and federal Governments; the gradual extension of anti-discrimination legislation to all Australian states in the areas of employment, education, housing and access to goods and services; the integration of disabled persons into federal and state public services; the introduction of 24-hour state-subsidized transport services for disabled persons; the expansion of local rehabilitation centres; the development of national construction standards providing for access to buildings by disabled persons. Lastly, the restructuring of the Commonwealth disability pension scheme should substantially improve opportunities for the employment, training and rehabilitation of disabled persons.

18. During the 1980s, his Government had collaborated closely with non-governmental organizations in establishing new directions for policies, services and programmes for the disabled. It especially supported the practical initiatives of the United Nations for the recognition of the right to dignity, an independent life and equal opportunities of doubly disadvantaged disabled persons, including women, aborigines and islanders, non-English-speaking persons and certain age-specific groups. Much remained to be done, however, and his Government intended to pursue its activities in the 1990s. His delegation wished to recall the proposal put forward by Sweden, at the May 1990 session of the Economic and Social Council, for the establishment of an open-ended working group to develop standard rules with a view to ensuring equal opportunities for disabled persons. It fervently hoped that that working group would take into account the recommendations contained in the report of the meeting of experts on alternative ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, and that the question of access to buildings and the possibility of adopting international standards in that area would be considered.

19. In response to suggestions made on 17 October 1990 by Mr. Hoegh, he stated that during the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) a national co-ordinating committee of non-governmental organizations had been established in Australia to advise on various disability issues and the programme for the Year. Many of its advisory functions had been taken up by the Disability Advisory Council of Australia. Australia recommended particularly that Governments and the United Nations should consult disabled persons on implementation of any legislative or other measure having an impact on their lives. It supported the suggestion that bilateral aid programmes should be reviewed to give higher priority to assistance to disadvantaged groups, especially persons with disabilities, taking into account recipient country objectives. Australia was placing increasing importance on accessibility standards in the broadest context, not only access to buildings, but also greater communications access. His delegation applauded the translation of the initial debate of the Third Committee on that cluster of items into sign language. It was desirable for United Nations documents and publicity and educational materials to appear so far as possible in braille, large print and audio tape, as was the current common practice in most official departments in Australia. It would also be advisable to avoid discriminatory terminology, such as "the handicapped" or "the disabled", and to use expressions such as "persons with a

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handicap" or "persons with a disability", which placed the emphasis on the person rather than the handicap.

20. Referring briefly to agenda item 104, he emphasized the fundamental role of the family in society. As the International Year of the Family approached, the diversity, cultural characteristics and needs of families must be highlighted and the family must be strengthened. The International Year of the Family should be devoted particularly to the study of practical problems, such as the impact of a handicap on family life.

21. Mr. ZAWACKI (Poland) said that the integration of youth into society was a complex process requiring wide-ranging programmes and strategies. The Polish Government was aware of the difficulty of the task, particularly because of the country's transition to a market economy. The young people were expecting the reconstruction to revitalize the economy and, consequently, create new opportunities for them.

22. Polish society was relatively young, with 30 per cent of the population under 18 years. Since 1985, the birth rate had fallen, which would change the demographic structure of the country in the years to come. The nuclear family predominated, but the number of single-parent families was growing constantly. Relationships between parents and children still followed the traditional authoritarian pattern.

23. The reform programme undertaken by the new Government was intended to improve the economy, but families faced problems which had not previously existed. Overburdened by work, parents had less time to devote to their children. Furthermore, because of a noticeable decline in real wages, more and more families could buy only the cheapest foods; cases of malnutrition had been discovered recently among children. The number of unemployed was increasing as well as the number of persons threatened with job loss, especially among youth.

24. The economic situation was shaping the attitude of Polish youth. In Poland a noticeable disinterest in further education, particularly at the higher levels, was noted. Furthermore, only a small percentage of youth were active in politics. His Government faced the difficult task of developing a new social policy designed to improve the situation of youth and to establish a system that would encourage their participation in the social and political life of the country. Despite those problems, Polish youth currently had a unique opportunity to fulfil their political aspirations by forming independent and democratic associations and movements.

25. The Government intended to formulate a youth policy in conformity with the long-term strategy and practical recommendations adopted by the General Assembly at its fortieth session. Improvement of the general situation of youth, however, remained an elusive goal. The follow-up activities of International Youth Year within the United Nations system and inter-agency co-operation in youth research were thus especially important. Better data bases on youth would help to make United Nations activities more effective. To that end, all Member States should

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furnish the Secretary-General with more detailed information on their youth policies.

26. The principal results of the World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, had been increased awareness of the problems and rights of persons with disabilities, the growing number of organizations of disabled persons and the substantial increase in the numbers of censuses and surveys with a disability component. Member States must continue to find innovative ways of integrating the needs and interests of disabled persons into national planning. Unfortunately, it must be admitted that implementation of the World Programme of Action had fallen short of expectation.

27. His Government had taken measures to implement the recommendations of the World Programme of Action, but the end of the decade had coincided with a difficult period for Poland. In such circumstances, the Government must, above all, protect the most vulnerable groups, among which were the disabled. Recently, the Government had included that objective in the new social policy.

28. In recent times, new guiding principles had been established for governmental institutions and various organizations working with disabled persons and emphasized the rehabilitation, particularly the vocational rehabilitation, of those persons. Particular attention had also been given to the question of disabled children. Numerous steps had been taken to meet their needs in all areas - health care, rehabilitation, education, recreation and culture - as well as in social benefits and assistance.

29. His Government had noted a need for a comprehensive approach to the various problems faced by disabled persons, in health care, family life, education, work and communication, among others. In that regard, it had concerned itself particularly with means of helping the handicapped to achieve their goals, whatever the nature or degree of their disability. More than in the past, those efforts had had an effect on the rehabilitation of the chronically ill, co-operation with families, integration into schools, construction of more accessible facilities, and grants of higher benefits for the most severely disabled over age 18. The Government was encouraging modernization of orthopaedic and rehabilitation equipment, and the design and manufacture of toys to stimulate the development of visually impaired children.

30. Despite the many initiatives taken to make Polish society more aware of the problems and needs of the disabled, much remained to be done in that field.

31. Ms. HAMALAINEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that social questions were inseparable from equal opportunity for all. The concept of human resources development was central to national strategies in education, health care, family planning, water and sanitation, nutrition and housing. Such development should take place above all in accordance with the essential principles of democracy, human rights and the participation of both men and women.



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32. Human development could, however, be threatened by certain factors with negative social consequences, such as the crises erupting in various parts of the globe, which threatened all population groups, and environmental degradation, not to overlook certain psychological and psychosocial factors not given sufficient consideration.

33. It was well known that, when a conflict erupted between two countries or within a country itself, it was the children who suffered most from hunger and disease. In that context, the Nordic countries believed that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child could make a contribution to a noticeable improvement in social security, the living environment and a future for children.

34. The improvement of family life depended on the progress made in a variety of areas, including equality issues, which the Nordic countries felt were deserving of particular attention as the United Nations prepared for the International Year of the Family. The programme for the Year should be based on the widest possible definition of the family, so that all dimensions of the family and all types of family units (including single-parent and extended families) would be considered, and stereotypes would be avoided. While the situation of women deserved special attention, the role of men in the family, especially as fathers, should not be excluded.

35. The 1989-1993 Action Plan for co-operation between women and men, adopted by the Nordic Council of Ministers, concentrated on two themes: the role of women in economic development and the problems connected with the dual responsibilities of family and professional life, which were related to the need for equal opportunities in the labour market and for good child-care facilities.

36. The importance of young people as a population group made it essential to integrate them into society. The report of the United Nations-organized international symposium on the integration of youth, held at Toledo in June 1990, called for dynamic interaction between young people and adults.

37. With regard to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted in the context of the 1983-1992 United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, she noted that barriers of all types continued to prevent disabled persons from participating fully in community life, in industrialized and developing countries alike. The Nordic countries felt that the success of the Decade was of the utmost importance to the development of all nations. Their Governments had therefore supported the activities undertaken for the Decade, and had initiated concrete action to achieve the Decade's goals. On the initiative of Sweden, the Economic and Social Council had adopted unanimously, at its first session in 1990, a resolution authorizing the Commission for Social Development to elaborate standard minimum rules for the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. Norway had financed the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General to promote implementation of the Decade, and Denmark had financed the post of Press Officer in the Office of the Special Representative. The Nordic Council had recently organized a two-day seminar on the situation of disabled persons and on the



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implementation of the World Programme of Action in those countries. Sweden and Finland had made special contributions to the Disabled Persons Unit of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

38. In May 1990, the United Nations and the Government of Finland had arranged a meeting of experts in Järvenpää to conduct a feasibility study on the substantive, financial and administrative implications of alternative ways to mark the end of the Decade in 1992. The recommendations formulated at that meeting would contribute significantly to the drafting of standard minimum rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. It had also been proposed at the Järvenpää meeting that the General Assembly should convene, in 1993, an international ministerial-level conference on disability. The Nordic countries were carefully examining that proposal.

39. The Nordic countries emphasized that Governments and the United Nations system should work to strengthen organizations of disabled persons to facilitate their progress in various areas: independence and participation of disabled persons on an equal basis; development co-operation by disabled persons; the special problems of women with disabilities, particularly, but not exclusively, in developing countries; procedures at the national and international levels to secure implementation of existing human rights standards; and the situation of disabled children.

40. The Nordic countries, whose Governments co-operated closely with organizations of disabled persons, supported the establishment of national co-ordination committees on disability. They also favoured the development of guidelines to assist Governments and United Nations bodies in establishing an appropriate framework for their co-operation with organizations of the disabled. Some positive results had been obtained at the international level, but much more could be done, such as designing a framework for the implementation of a long-term strategy.

41. Another topic of importance to the Nordic countries was crime prevention. The Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Havana at the end of August 1990, had yielded many innovative ideas on how to improve the Organization's programme on crime. The discussions held on reducing prison sentences and developing alternative forms of punishment were encouraging. The Nordic countries felt that violence in the family should be a central theme at the ninth congress. The protection of minors who had been deprived of their liberty and action to prevent juvenile crime were among the central issues that should be handled jointly by social and judicial administrations.

42. At the Havana Congress, model treaties on extradition and on mutual assistance in criminal matters had been adopted. Those model treaties should enhance international co-operation in that field, and help to overcome the long-standing problems caused by different legal systems and traditions.

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43. The Nordic countries supported the elaboration of a more effective programme of crime prevention and criminal justice. Such a programme, however, would necessitate not only new resources, but also the establishment of priorities in those areas where United Nations efforts could be of practical importance.

44. The Nordic countries noted that, to date, the General Assembly had never included in its agenda the consideration of problems related to the excessive use of alcohol. The report and recommendations of the Expert Meeting on the Negative Social Consequences of Alcohol Use, organized at Oslo by the Norwegian Government in co-operation with the United Nations Office at Vienna, should contribute to further study of those consequences and of effective international means of preventing them.

45. The Nordic countries welcomed the Declaration, adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, in which the Assembly had recognized the tremendous importance of human resources development. The ultimate objective of economic policy and development was the improvement of the human condition and enhancement of the contribution of all persons to development. Development co-operation should emphasize human resources development and concentrate much more on the needs of the most vulnerable population groups in society. Governments and donors must integrate the social dimension into all stages of development activity, especially in times of economic crisis, and must ensure that the appropriate range of professional skills was available for that purpose.

46. Mrs. SYAHRUDDIN (Indonesia) said that the profound changes that had taken place throughout the world in the previous months had given rise to a new era of international co-operation. The United Nations, as the primary multilateral organization for the maintenance of peaceful relationships among peoples and for the promotion of economic and social development, had achieved new prominence. The recent World Summit for Children demonstrated that international co-operation on political questions extended to co-operation on social questions. However, it must be borne in mind that social progress could not be substantial and lasting unless it rested on a solid economic foundation.

47. In the 1980s, some developing countries had experienced social progress in spite of the economic recession. However, in most cases, the social situation had worsened. In the Supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137, para. 47), the Secretary-General stated that "there is ample evidence of a deterioration in living conditions and an aggravation of problems of poverty in virtually all major regions of developing countries". The difficulties of social development in the developing countries had been exacerbated by external debt problems, an outflow of resources and falling commodity prices.

48. However, the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, to be adopted at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, gave reason to hope that the coming decade would witness a significant improvement in the human condition everywhere. Likewise, the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly had provided an opportunity for the States Members

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of the United Nations to reaffirm their commitment to revitalizing the development of developing countries. The human development index of UNDP indicated that quality of life and social welfare were central aspects and indicators of development. Government policies could significantly improve social conditions during periods of structural adjustment, through the "adjustment with a human face" approach, provided that co-operation was forthcoming from the international community, and particularly from its more prosperous members.

49. With regard to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, towards the middle of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons it had become clear that it would not be possible to attain the Decade's goals, namely, full participation of disabled persons in social life and development, and equality. Indonesia therefore welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/470) on alternative ways to mark the end of the Decade, and fully supported the conclusion (para. 33 of the report) that full integration of disabled persons into society was made possible by refocusing policies, programmes and projects from care-taking to independence. Disabled people should be considered a vital resource for development. In fact, in 1983, Indonesia had set up a co-ordinating body for social welfare efforts for disabled persons, to which organizations for the disabled belonged.

50. At its thirty-first session, the Commission for Social Development had undertaken a second review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging, and had set forth several important recommendations to supplement the Plan of Action and encourage its implementation. The report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/45/420) contained a draft global calendar of events on aging 1991-1992, and it also gave information on the action programme on aging for 1992 and beyond. Indonesia looked forward to the publication by the United Nations Statistical Office of a special issue of the United Nations Demographic Yearbook 1990, placing special emphasis on aging, disability and living arrangements of elderly persons. The publication was particularly pertinent since the rapid changes in society as a result of the application of new technologies, of increased participation of women in the development process, and of urbanization, had all brought change to the structure of the family, which in many developing countries had been the prime support facility for the aged. The United Nations Demographic Yearbook 1990 would thus be a most useful contribution to the study of the impact of such change on the elderly.

51. Likewise, the youth of the world were also facing the challenges of a changing family structure, and the process of economic and social development. In his report on policies and programmes involving young people: participation, development, peace (A/45/422), the Secretary-General mentioned, in particular, the activities in connection with the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, which presented a suitable occasion for focusing global attention again on youth issues in the context of the changing international situation. Indonesia was continuing its celebration of the Indonesian Youth Decade, 1986-1996, and the Indonesian Youth National Committee was organizing activities throughout the country with a view to drawing attention to youth issues.



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52. Indonesia welcomed the note by the Secretary-General (A/45/365), on the progress made so far in preparations for the International Year of the Family in 1994. Rather than establish a new national committee, Indonesia had considered it more appropriate to entrust the commemoration of the Year to existing national and local committees, set up to commemorate other annual activities.

53. Mr. RASTAM (Malaysia) said that the changes currently taking place in the global political arena should enable greater resources and energies to be devoted to promoting social progress and social justice throughout the world. International co-operation in that area should be given appropriate attention, because the concerted efforts of all States Member of the United Nations could produce positive results in overcoming the social challenges facing all of them.

54. The supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137) met the requirements set out in General Assembly resolution 44/56 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/72. However, as Mr. Rafeuddin Ahmed had said, the foremost conclusion was that stagnation and reversal in economic conditions in a large number of developing countries, particularly in Africa and Latin America, during the decade of the 1980s had set back social progress and reversed the positive trends in the three decades since the 1950s. The delegation of Malaysia hoped that future reports on the world social situation would contain adequate recommendations in view of the urgent need for steps to be taken to alleviate the problems faced by the countries concerned.

55. Malaysia welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to proclaim 1994 as the International Year of the Family. It was extremely important to recognize the leading role of the family in society. In making preparations for the Year, the Secretariat should take into consideration the varying social and cultural values of different societies. The Year should be an opportunity for the international community to exchange views on the various roles of the family in different parts of the world.

56. Malaysia recognized the importance of the family as the contributor to and beneficiary of economic progress, social advancement and a better quality of life. A family perspective had therefore been progressively woven into Malaysian development plans, beginning with the passage in Parliament of the Family Planning Act in 1966. In the course of time, the scope of family planning had progressed beyond the maternal and child health approach, to a broader family welfare and development perspective and to community-oriented programmes. The new population policy, which had taken effect in 1984, aimed at ultimately creating a quality population or a developed human resource for the country. The fifth Malaysian development plan (1986-1990), sought to increase awareness of the means of controlling births, with special emphasis on family development and welfare.

57. Under the national family development programme in Malaysia, which emphasized the total and balanced development of the individual and the family, the Government had organized a campaign aimed at creating awareness among the population of the family relationship in order to enhance family stability and harmony. The federal



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Government had provided the funds for major activities at all levels. The proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, with the theme: "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world", was most timely for Malaysia, and would help in intensifying existing national programmes.

58. His delegation felt that more youth exchange programmes should be set up between Member States. That would help to promote international co-operation among young people in crucial areas.

59. With regard to the feasibility study on alternative ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, he felt that the final years of the Decade should be marked by activities that would ensure high visibility for issues concerning the disabled.

60. In Malaysia, the problems of aging were still under control; nevertheless it was interesting to study the measures undertaken by other countries to overcome such problems. Malaysia supported the suggestions concerning activities in the year 1992, which marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Aging.

61. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta) said that the dramatic changes which had occurred during the past 12 months in Eastern and central Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa could not but encourage hopes for the future. The consolidation of democracy accompanied by full respect for human rights and dignity were cornerstones for the furtherance of economic, social and cultural development. However, Malta wished to express its concern at the danger that those trends might be thwarted by the negative consequences of the invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq.

62. The Government of Malta had established a strategy which aimed at strengthening social justice by reinforcing the traditional forms of financial assistance with innovative measures designed to emphasize personal involvement, whether in the context of the family or of the community.

63. In co-operation with the Council of Europe and the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Malta's Ministry for Social Policy had successfully organized in Valetta, in November 1989, a European Conference on "Integrating Social and Family Policy for the 90s". The participants had agreed on the basic principle that the State must be a key actor in the rejuvenation of social policy.

64. In the field of formal education, especially at the most junior level, the Government of Malta had set up an Educational Welfare Unit with the following main objectives: (a) to identify at an early stage psycho-social problems faced by children and to provide the required support to their families, (b) to follow up cases of truancy, and (c) to offer counselling and other services in schools and families in the event of unsatisfactory scholastic achievement. Another important function of the service was to help adolescents, at a time of rapid physical and

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

emotional change often involving difficulties with their families, to overcome their sense of insecurity, communicate better with their parents and become integrated as responsible adult members of society. The Maltese Government remained fully aware, however, that it could not on its own cover the full range of economic, social and emotional needs of young people. In that area, as in others, it was mindful of the role of voluntary organizations, which must be encouraged and enhanced.

65. The most evident symptom of the stress on the family was the growing number of marital and parental failures. The policy of the Maltese Government was to act principally by upgrading the services of voluntary agencies. In addition, the recently established Marital and Parental Support Unit gave advice and support in all matters concerning the family.

66. The Maltese Government was also ensuring the continuation and improvement of all forms of social assistance associated with a caring society. Its overall policy aimed at increasing the participation of every individual in community life, since the strengthening of community solidarity was a vital factor in both the preventive and the curative aspects of social welfare. In that spirit, the National Commission for the Handicapped, set up in November 1987, included disabled persons and parents of disabled children among its members. The Commission identified the needs of handicapped persons and helped their families and voluntary organizations to respond to those needs. It also assisted in co-ordinating action taken to implement government decisions and any other measures that it might approve.

67. The Government had allocated building plots and housing units in each locality for disabled persons or families with a disabled member. The Housing Authority had also agreed to build a number of apartments especially designed for such persons. In addition, the Commission had ensured that the Government offered special incentives to enterprises that employed and trained disabled persons. It had given its full support to the Awareness Week organized by the Federation of Voluntary Bodies working for the Handicapped. Disabled persons could thus, despite their physical disability, feel that they were an integral part of society.

68. One of the most significant phenomena of the twentieth century was the aging of the population. Until recently, it had been viewed as a phenomenon peculiar to the developed countries, but, as a result of improved social and medical conditions, it had become a feature of the developing countries as well. In 1980, out of an elderly world population of nearly 371 million, 53 per cent had been living in developing countries, and that proportion was expected to reach 71 per cent by the year 2025. Moreover, in contrast to the pace noted in the developed countries, population aging was expected to be a very rapid process in the developing countries, where the number of elderly persons would increase by 83 per cent by the year 2000.

69. Every Government had to face the social, economic, medical and demographic impact of that phenomenon on resource allocation. Effective social and economic

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

development demanded a proper balance between social, economic and environmental factors on the one hand, and the implications of changes in population structure on the other. Such problems should be addressed in the context of overall economic and social development planning programmes. Concerted action by planners and policy makers, and greater public awareness of the implications of population aging, would prevent the international community from being overtaken by events. The policy of the Government of Malta was to integrate as fully as possible the services for the elderly provided by the State, by voluntary organizations, such as the Church, and by the elderly themselves.

70. Several speakers had observed that Governments had not been contributing fully to the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging. The Maltese Government, for its part, was very actively involved, at both the national and the international levels. Resolved, as it was, to respond to the appeals contained in the relevant United Nations resolutions, his Government supported the activities of the International Institute on Aging in Malta and was contributing financially and in kind to both the Institute and the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. The activities of the Institute, which worked in close collaboration with various United Nations organizations, deserved full recognition.

71. Mr. SUAZO (Honduras), referring to agenda item 104, said that every effort must be made to ensure that the International Year of the Family was an outstanding event, both nationally and internationally. In that regard, he shared the view of the Director of the Social Development Division concerning the urgent need to prepare the budget for that event.

72. Concerned as it was about any threat to the integrity of the family, Honduras was dismayed at the events in the Persian Gulf, where thousands of families had been displaced, while others, forced to remain in high-risk areas, found their very existence endangered. Because of those deplorable events and the situation experienced daily by the most vulnerable sectors of society, the International Year of the Family must not be a short-lived event of minor importance, but should provide an opportunity to mobilize the international community for the benefit of the family.

73. Honduras had done a great deal in that regard, having set aside a substantial proportion of its limited resources for the family. The establishment of the Honduran Social Investment Fund (FHIS), which came under the national plan for the period 1990-1994, was intended specifically to provide support for vulnerable family groups. The Fund, which would benefit 300,000 Hondurans on a temporary or permanent basis, would be used to finance the following programmes: immediate job creation for marginalized rural and urban sectors; support for production through the establishment of family, craft and other enterprises; construction of community facilities for production or social purposes; and provision of education allowances for mothers with dependent children.

74. It was a new experiment for which Honduras hoped that international co-operation would be forthcoming.



75. Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana) said that his country had expected that the improved international climate would help to refocus attention on the major social problems. Recent events in the Gulf had to some extent caused Guyana to restrain its optimism. Nonetheless, it continued to believe that there existed a political will to address the most serious humanitarian concerns, as evidenced by the recent convening in New York of the World Summit for Children.

76. The Declaration and Plan of Action emanating from the Summit should serve as a basis for concerted international action to protect the welfare of children. The UNICEF report, entitled The State of the World's Children 1990, showed that children, especially in the developing countries, were the principal victims of society's failures, although it was they who represented the future of humanity.

77. Guyana, a developing country, had made the protection of young people a matter of national policy. Unfortunately, those efforts continued to be frustrated by an unfavourable economic environment. In the past decade, the social infrastructure had been seriously weakened by the unbearable burden of debt. In order to pay their debt and preserve international credit standing, many low-income countries, such as Guyana, had had to adopt harsh adjustment policies and make cut-backs in crucial social services, particularly in the areas of education and primary health care.

78. In the field of education, despite well-intentioned policies aimed at providing free education from nursery to university, Guyana was recording a steady decline in quality. The weakness of the educational system had very quickly provoked new social problems. Many young Guyanese were forced by economic circumstances onto the labour market long before they were sufficiently qualified. The contribution they could make to the family could satisfy only the most basic short-term needs, and even that at great sacrifice. Eventually they were relegated to the ranks of the unemployed, thus unwittingly forfeiting their future and that of the nation.

79. His Government, despite competing priorities, had continued to provide free primary, secondary and university education as well as programmes for young adult education and early school-leavers. In addition, it financed technical institutes and provided free vocational training to all who wished to improve their opportunities in the job market.

80. Potential human resources could not be developed without adequate health services. Primary health care in all institutions owned and financed by the Government was provided free of cost. However, the capacity of the Government to offer those services and to respond to growing population needs had been severely eroded over the past decade, as the national economy had fallen into decline. Those difficulties had increased with the appearance of new problems, such as AIDS and drug abuse, which touched many young people despite continuing, though admittedly limited, programmes for education, prevention and rehabilitation.

81. Given the severe financial constraints under which all social programmes operated, his Government could not over-emphasize the need for international



(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

support measures for social and economic rehabilitation, particularly in respect of young people. Guyana was anxious, therefore, that the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year should be more than a mere commemoration. All nations should accord prime importance to the identification and means of implementation of the planned global strategy on youth for the year 2000 and beyond. They must also make good their commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

82. Children were far from the only victims of social deterioration. Even while Guyana proceeded with the rigorous implementation of its economic recovery programme, it sought to cushion the impact on the most vulnerable groups: women, the aged, the disabled and the homeless. It had devised a Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP), designed to promote a selected range of projects, with a maximum life span of two years, to foster the creation of employment, and to enhance household income. SIMAP had already proved beneficial, but it could be truly successful only if it received sufficient external financing. Moreover, like any such programme, SIMAP was only a palliative: in other words, it treated the symptoms but not the causes of poverty. As the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Director of the Social Development Division had noted in their statements, those affected were often incapable of voicing their complaints. Requests by the Secretariat for information often went unanswered, and it was only during the General Assembly that delegations could expound the particular problems of their countries. That state of affairs reflected current constraints.

83. At bottom, social ills were merely a symptom of a deeper malaise resulting from a highly unbalanced economic system. As the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had pointed out, there was a clear nexus between economic and social issues, and between those and political issues. The approach to social problems should therefore be both comprehensive and co-ordinated, with full regard for their indivisible character. In that context, Guyana welcomed the declaration by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna regarding the integration of substantive programmes.

84. The gravity of the world's social problems demanded a serious rethinking of traditional strategies in order to adapt them to the circumstances of the day. If, as had been suggested in the debate, those strategies had become outmoded, new and more appropriate measures must be devised speedily. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the establishment of the Working Group to consider ways and means of rationalizing the Committee's work.

85. Mrs. MARZAZI (Morocco) said that her country was making great efforts in the field of social development, as exemplified by the establishment in 1987 of the National Institute for Social Action - of which 39.5 per cent of the young trainees were girls - which provided specialized training for posts in local administrations and semi-public and private bodies. In that field, the people of Morocco were themselves playing an active role, through the local communities, by expressing their views on the development of social programmes and the establishment of social services. Similarly, co-operative activities in Morocco were becoming increasingly

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

widespread, particularly in the agricultural and handicrafts sectors, both of which received State assistance. The recent convening in Marrakesh of an international conference of all non-governmental organizations concerned with social welfare throughout the world bore witness to the importance that Morocco attached to that question.

86. Morocco was aware that modern life encouraged societies to cease to have an interest in their young, elderly and handicapped members and it was glad to see that the international community, concerned about their critical situation, had set itself the objective of ensuring their full enjoyment of the rights enshrined in international instruments. However, a reading of the documents before the Third Committee showed that that goal had not been achieved. Her delegation therefore supported most of the recommendations in the reports of the Secretary-General, and welcomed the activities being carried out at all levels to enable those three categories to take their place in society and look forward hopefully and optimistically to life.

87. Despite difficult economic circumstances, Morocco had embarked on a very important initiative on behalf of young people, the principal component of Moroccan society, 61 per cent of which consisted of young people between 4 and 25 years of age. The organization of cultural, artistic and sports activities for young people, together with seminars where they could express themselves freely, financial support for youth organizations and participation by young Moroccans in various international and regional meetings were different aspects of that initiative. Furthermore, in order to solve the extremely serious problem of youth unemployment, the King of Morocco had announced, in July 1990, the establishment of a national youth employment council, which was seeking to associate all the forward-looking elements in the country in a search for solutions to that problem.

88. Although for the immediate future, because of the composition of the Moroccan population and the respect for family traditions, the situation of the elderly in Morocco did not constitute a particular problem, the Government had nevertheless adopted a series of measures on behalf of the elderly, including the opening of workrooms, the launching of health programmes (to combat hypertension and ophthalmic disease) and the provision of material and financial support to associations of elderly persons.

89. The Dahir (decree) on social protection for the blind was an example of the steps taken by her Government on behalf of the disabled. Vocational training centres and co-operatives had been established to encourage their rehabilitation and integration into society; schools had been built for disabled children and an artificial-limb workshop had been set up at Marrakesh. Lastly, several international marathons had been held in Morocco, at which Moroccan and other disabled sportsmen and women had performed remarkably.

90. It was unfortunate that the world economic situation, aggravated by events in the Gulf, would not allow national Governments to implement the plans of action adopted to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups on which the

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

Third Committee was concentrating its attention. As the representative of Saudi Arabia had remarked, 1 per cent of the money invested in the arms race would be enough to put a large part of those programmes into effect. Although the current world climate was favourable to disarmament, the tremendous inequality in respect of economic and social development was a destabilizing factor that compromised the future world order which many hoped to establish. The international colloquium organized in May 1990 by the International Institute for Peace had shown that interdependence was increasingly becoming the basis of international relations. The close link between economic and social problems was finally being recognized, but it was also necessary to understand that world security depended entirely on the solution of those problems. International co-operation must therefore be more vigorously affirmed, and interdependence in North-South relations must be conceived in such a way as to ensure the peace, security and welfare of all members of the great human family.

91. Mr. MONTALVO (Ecuador) recalled some of the conclusions of the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137). Economic and social conditions, particularly in Africa and Latin America, had continued to deteriorate during the 1980s, the gap between the rich and the poor had grown substantially wider, the proportion of the world's population living in absolute poverty had reached 20 per cent and external debt had grown from \$572 billion in 1980 to \$1,155 billion, or 44 per cent of the GNP of the developing countries. Motivated by the need to confront such issues and formulate common strategies, Ecuador had offered to host the Second Regional Conference on Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean from 20 to 23 November 1990. His country agreed with Miss Anstee that social development and social justice must not be relegated to second place, since the economic and social aspects of development were indivisible. His delegation also had certain reservations regarding the need for the "structural adjustment" as described in the aforementioned report, as a means of coping with the problem of indebtedness.

92. With regard to the question of youth, he reiterated his country's adherence to the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples and its support for the proposals on the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year and strategies for the year 2000. He welcomed the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/422) on measures which Government should adopt with respect to youth. His delegation noted with satisfaction the reference by the Secretariat to the work of his country's National Directorate of Youth and specifically requested the inclusion of Ecuadorian youth in the original projects for employment of the Institute of HOPE. Lastly, his country looked forward to the International Year of the Family, scheduled for 1994, and would co-operate fully during the organizational phase.

93. With respect to the elderly, his Government, implementing the recommendations of the General Assembly, had established a National Directorate of Gerontology. Furthermore, the Ecuadorian Congress was currently reviewing a bill guaranteeing the rights of the elderly.



(Mr. Montalvo, Ecuador)

94. His country was doing everything within its means to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and recognized the important role which non-governmental organizations played in that regard. However, the gap between rich and poor countries in such matters was enormous. For example, while countries were advised to build sports facilities that were accessible to wheelchair-bound persons, many of those countries, including his own, did not even have the resources needed to provide wheelchairs to all those who could use them. That was just one example of the impact of economic factors on social reality.

95. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados), referring to agenda item 96, said that his country, embracing the principle that an investment in youth was an investment in the future, had entrusted its Department of Youth and Community Development with the task of implementing a comprehensive training programme targeting young people. The objective of the programme was to develop in youth the skills needed to establish and manage small business enterprises. The programme, which was being conducted in 31 community centres throughout the country, covered all facets of running a business: start-up, financing, management and marketing of products.

96. Preparing young people for leadership roles in public life was another important dimension of youth training. The Department of Youth and Community Development, in conjunction with the national television station, had established a television programme designed to enhance the social awareness of young people. A wide range of social issues - including unemployment, AIDS, youth involvement in agriculture, youth and crime, the environment, the rights and responsibilities of youth, the role of the church, and the influence of adults on the morality of the younger generation - were analysed and discussed during the broadcasts.

97. His country also maintained a keen interest in youth activities at the regional level. For example, Caribbean Youth Day, a large cultural and crafts fair which attracted thousands of young people, was observed annually in his country. At the international level, his country had participated in the World Summit for Children held in New York in late September and was one of the signatories of the Declaration adopted on that occasion. Lastly, on 9 October 1990 his country had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

98. His delegation welcomed the dialogue established between United Nations bodies on issues relating to youth, as indicated by the seventh meeting of the United Nations informal inter-agency working group on the International Youth Year held at Vienna in December 1989 and the International Symposium on the Integration of Young People into Society held at Toledo, Spain, in June 1990. His delegation hoped that similar symposia would be held in other regions of the world with the participation of youth organizations and non-governmental organizations. In that regard, it deplored the lack of co-operation with non-governmental youth organizations at all levels. The activities of NGOs played a crucial role in national and regional strategies for youth. In view of the serious problems which directly affected young people - the AIDS pandemic, illiteracy, poverty, debt and drug abuse - there was an urgent need for such strategies.



99. Miss ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia), referring to agenda item 90, said that the reports before the Third Committee showed that the world social situation at the beginning of the 1990s was uneven and complex. The fact that various regional conflicts were moving towards a solution gave cause for some optimism. Unfortunately, in the economic sphere, the Gulf crisis had aggravated an already troublesome international situation. Her delegation therefore was gratified that, in his report on the work of the organization, the Secretary-General had drawn the attention of the world community to the need to "mitigate the economic and social consequences" of the crisis and to "provide a safety net for developing countries ill-equipped to cope with such situations".

100. The figures in the Report on the World Social Situation showed that the legacy of the 1980s was truly dismal: some 1 billion people, 55 per cent of them in Asia, lived in conditions of absolute poverty; poverty had become more severe in Africa; living conditions in most countries of Africa and Latin America had deteriorated during the 1980s; and nearly 3 million children died each year from avoidable diseases. Arresting and reversing those trends was the principal challenge during the last decade of the twentieth century. That required recognition of the primacy of interdependence in today's world and the crucial nature of international co-operation. Policy measures, moreover, should focus not only on economic growth as such, but also on the human dimension of development. That was the motivation behind her Government's policy, which emphasized the development of the individual in all respects.

101. Despite the achievements attained over the years by the people's Government, her country still faced a host of social problems, which affected the rural population most severely. While her country was basically self-sufficient in foodstuffs, it still faced serious nutritional problems. Although most of the population was literate much remained to be done to improve the educational system. Health services had to be improved. Lastly, statistics showed that one fifth of the households had an income below the subsistence level, and that in a country with a particularly unfavourable climate.

102. Faced with that situation, the Government had adopted a series of measures to increase wages, State pensions and unemployment allowances. The wages of agricultural co-operative members would be raised by 30 per cent, old-age pensions would be raised by 20 per cent, and new types of allowances would be paid to large families, single mothers with many children, disabled persons and the unemployed.

103. Unemployment in fact coexisted with a labour shortage in some sectors. To tackle that new type of social problem, the Government had established a Labour Ministry to ensure the efficient use of available labour resources.

104. In order for such measures, and others, to be fully successful, it was necessary to create a favourable international climate and to enhance co-operation. Instruments recently adopted at the international level, in particular, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children, augured well for progress in

(Miss Enkhtsetseg, Mongolia)

that field. For that reason, her delegation was convinced that it was more important than ever for the United Nations to alert States to their social responsibilities.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS  
  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
16th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 23 October 1990  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe)  
(Vice-Chairman)  
  
later: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)  
(Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Zindoga (Zimbabwe),  
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (A/45/137-E/1990/35)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING  
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AGENDA ITEM 104: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (continued) (A/45/365,  
A/C.3/45/3)

1. Mr. WARADI (Fiji), speaking on item 90 and drawing attention to paragraph 218 of the supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137), said that economic and social conditions were linked at all levels and that economic prosperity was predicated upon an understanding of social issues. The scarcity of appropriate international institutions had constituted an obstacle to the framing of social development policies that had to be overcome in the United Nations. National legislative, administrative and economic measures were required to supplement international efforts to improve the standard of living of the world's population.

2. The small developing nations required greater assistance from the developed ones. The most pressing problem of the former was how to meet such basic needs as primary health care, adequate nutrition, social equality and justice, which were prerequisites for healthy individuals and societies. Scientific and technological progress played an important role in the social and economic development of society and their effects on individuals must not be ignored. Social and economic improvements in the world could also not be achieved without social justice.

3. Crime had become a social problem that now affected even countries as isolated as his own, and Fiji's national development plan included efforts to prevent crime. Its efforts, however, required international involvement and co-operation, and he welcomed the contribution that could be expected of the forthcoming Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. Crimes committed by the poor had social causes, and when such crimes were violent or crossed national borders they became a cause of great concern. His delegation therefore hoped that the economic gap between rich and poor countries would be narrowed and that international co-operation would stop international crime and bring its perpetrators to justice. The equal distribution of society's resources would contribute to the solution of social problems.



4. Mr. RALEBITSO (Lesotho) welcomed the attention the United Nations had continued to give to the problem of social development, which was inseparable from the problem of economic development. Social development required economic progress and a stable international political environment. In an increasingly interdependent world, there must be greater equality of social benefits in the developed and the developing countries and more justice in international social relations. The report in document A/45/137 showed that more work needed to be done in many areas, particularly in Africa, where efforts to implement the objectives of the Declaration on Social Progress for Development had met with serious obstacles in the form of deteriorating education, hunger, malnutrition, disease, drought and environmental degradation.

5. His own country recognized its primary responsibility for the social development of its people and had given priority to education, health, youth, the disabled, women and rural development. Since the country's resources were limited, it appealed to the international community for greater assistance in those efforts.

6. In connection with agenda item 96, he noted with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/422) and endorsed the recommendations in paragraph 14. Financial and material resources were required to achieve the objectives of youth development, and he appealed to the international community to provide more resources for his own country's youth projects. He also welcomed the decision to give priority to the integration of young people into society. Lesotho had a comprehensive programme to promote the mental, physical and moral development of youth.

7. Concerning international efforts to help the disabled, he said that national associations in his country worked closely with a number of international organizations, many of which had provided the country with welcome assistance in its efforts to rehabilitate the disabled, improve their quality of life and promote their full integration into society. He urged all Governments, as well as the private sector and the general public, to work for the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and supported the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/470).

8. Turning to the aged, he said that services to promote their welfare were urgently required, and he stressed the need to make resources available through the United Nations and its agencies as well as non-governmental organizations, in close collaboration with Governments, to address the social needs of the aged. Concerning the International Year of the Family, he was encouraged by the Secretary-General's positive efforts as described in his report (A/45/365) and said that his country would support all measures designed to ensure the success of the International Year. In preparing it, attention should be given to the protection of the family and its rights and responsibilities, in recognition of its fundamental role in society.

9. Ms. AL-ALAWI (Bahrain) said that the focus of development must be the human being and that her country attached great importance to comprehensive social and economic policies designed to make the best use of society's energies. In Bahrain,

(Ms. Al-Alawi, Bahrain)

social services were provided to all sectors of the population, including the disabled, without discrimination. The role of young people in development was also very important and her country therefore attached great importance to the implementation of the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. Her country was implementing that Declaration at all levels of society through youth programmes and activities. The report of the Secretary-General (A/45/422) stressed the importance of youth activities and follow-up activities even where resources were limited, and United Nations bodies played an important part in promoting such activities because they helped strengthen national capacities by providing information and guidance. She endorsed the recommendations in that report.

10. The aged also had a very important status in her country, which provided a vast array of medical and social services for them. Bahrain implemented the International Plan of Action on Aging and supported the measures set forth in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/420).

11. Lastly, she stressed the importance of the feasibility study presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/470) and supported the recommendations in that document.

12. Mr. SARR (Mali) said that, in spite of the encouraging political changes in the world, the economic and social situation in many developing countries continued to stagnate and even deteriorate, while the developed countries had experienced a long period of sustained growth. Although international trade had expanded, the share of the developing countries in that trade had declined. The supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137-E/1990/35) provided a sombre picture of the difficult conditions in developing countries with regard to social development. The standard of living had deteriorated in a large number of those countries. In many of them per capita GDP had declined to the levels of 1981 and, in some, to those of 1971. The debtor countries had become net exporters of capital.

13. There was an emerging international consensus in favour of the establishment of a new, more just and more equitable international economic order. The new order resulting from the end of the cold war would not be lasting if 80 per cent of the world's population was excluded from development. Since young people constituted the sector of society that was most affected by the deterioration of the national economy, Mali sought to promote greater participation on their part in the development process. Within the framework of the International Youth Year, it had established a national commission to co-ordinate activities for the Year and had adopted a national youth programme for the decade 1986-1995. In view of the increased numbers of job applicants in Mali as a result of structural adjustment programmes and far-reaching economic reform, Mali was taking steps, with the support of the international community, to place young school graduates in the rural, manufacturing and the service sectors in order to develop a spirit of enterprise among young people.

14. Mr. KIRUTTINAN (India) said that man's attention had been focused on social issues since the dawn of history and was still focused on them today when bridges of trust and co-operation were being built. The 1989 Report on the World Situation showed how the promise of economic betterment and social progress experienced in the 1960s and 1970s had been disappointed in the 1980s, and it was to be wondered whether disaster lay ahead in the 1990s. The scenario of disaster should be met with dedication by nations to the goals they set for themselves in the social field and with a concerted international effort which reinforced that dedication.

15. Guidance in approaching social issues was to be found primarily in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development adopted 21 years previously. Not only had the goals of the Declaration not been achieved, but in recent years economic growth had failed to keep pace with the increase in population. Although it had been recognized in the Declaration that Governments were ultimately responsible for ensuring the social progress of their people, developing countries could not always generate the resources needed for the manifold activities they were called upon to undertake; hence the importance of international economic co-operation. However, in the last analysis and as noted in the supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137), Governments would remain a principal agency of social development because market mechanisms did not resolve problems of poverty.

16. The reports of the Secretary-General on the other issues currently under discussion in the Committee also testified to the valuable work done by the United Nations in connection with the problems facing the aging youth, the disabled and the family. Probably never before in the history of the world had so many young and old people been alive at the same time. It was an awesome fact that more than 50 per cent of the 820 million inhabitants of India were below the age of 21. The challenges of developing the skills of those young people were being addressed by the national and state governments and by the country's voluntary agencies as best they could with the limited resources available. In the view of his delegation, the role of the United Nations was to serve as both the conscience-keeper and the catalyst where social issues were concerned.

17. Mr. Somavia (Chile) took the Chair.

18. Ms. ASHTON (Bolivia) said the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation and the supplement to it (A/45/137) contained information of relevance, particularly to Latin American and Caribbean countries. Economic and social development were indivisible goals in that one could not be conceived of without the other. The economy of Latin America and the Caribbean had continued to deteriorate throughout the 1980s. The sharp decline in levels of social well-being in most countries of the region was deplorable. The growth rate of GDP in the region, which had been 5.4 per cent a year on average in the 1970s, dropped precipitously to only 1.5 per cent during the 1980s. In per capita terms, there was a net decline in the levels of economic growth.

19. In many countries, the rate of investment indicated a further deterioration of infrastructure, including social infrastructure, and also an increase in the



(Ms. Ashton, Bolivia)

already unacceptable levels of unemployment. Owing to the burden of their external debt, the countries of her region had become net contributors of financial resources to the countries of the North. Thus, the social progress achieved, at the cost of sacrifice, had come to an abrupt halt in the 1980s. Critical poverty had reached unacceptable levels and over half the population of some countries had dropped below minimum standards of well-being. The problem should be viewed in its national and international contexts. From the national perspective, social defence policies were called for to mitigate the social effects of the crisis and the negative impact of the structural adjustment measures it had been necessary to implement.

20. In Bolivia, the deterioration in the terms of trade, the steep drop in the prices of the country's main exports, the persistence of protectionist practices, the erection of trade barriers and the burden of servicing the debt had made the economy so unstable that the Government had been forced to adopt stringent measures with negative social consequences.

21. Without economic revitalization and the maintenance of significantly high growth rates, the road ahead would be difficult, and everything possible should be done to ensure that the new decade was characterized by development and international co-operation in the promotion of international trade flows and investment. As for the development of human resources, there was an unbreakable relationship between education and the acquisition of technical know-how, on the one hand, and sustained economic growth and development, on the other. In order to promote the development of human resources in developing countries, it would be necessary to solve existing problems in the areas of employment, health, the maintenance of a sound environment, nutrition and housing.

22. Although economic recession, changing production patterns and climbing unemployment affected every social group, they had a particular impact on youth. In Bolivia there was a fundamental need for the political will to design and execute programmes designed to meet the needs of young people since 65 per cent of the population was less than 30 years old and youth had become a dynamic factor in the national development process. Accordingly, the country's authorities were actively engaged in preparing a national youth plan. It was hoped that the global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session, devoted to the question of international co-operation against the illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances would soon be put into effect, since the primary victims of drugs were children and young people.

23. The problems of aging should be viewed within the economic and cultural system in operation in each country. The myth that most old people were socially dependent had to be eradicated. In Bolivia social welfare for the elderly was the responsibility of two government agencies. With support provided by the United Nations Trust Fund for the Aging, a project had been designed for the purpose of incorporating the elderly into the economic and social process. The Government had given priority to its programmes to strengthen family ties with a view to keeping elderly persons within their family structure.



(Ms. Ashton, Bolivia)

24. Bolivia had set into motion a national plan for the rehabilitation of the disabled based on the concept of "Health for All by the Year 2000". The government office responsible for the rehabilitation of the disabled was endeavouring to ensure that its action would reach the majority of the disabled in the country.

25. In conclusion, she said that her country's experience showed that people were very eager for social improvement and change. The people of the developing countries were worn down by the continuous sacrifices they were called upon to make as a result of the processes of adjustment. She stressed the importance of global interaction and of the role of the United Nations in the quest for an integral solution to the world's social problems.

26. Ms. SIMHA (Israel) said that the cluster of items currently under consideration was of vital importance to the whole international community. She would refer in particular to the International Year of the Family, which, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 42/134, would be celebrated in 1994. The family was not a new issue at the United Nations; the Declaration of Human Rights contained a number of provisions on that subject, in particular article 16, paragraph 3. The Declaration on Social Progress and Development and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women also contained a number of articles on the family and its role in society. In the International Year of the Family, issues relating to the advancement of women, the protection of children, the promotion of youth and concern for the disabled would all be dealt with within the context of the family. The human infant was normally born into a family, and if a normal family unit was lacking, his physical survival and his role within society had to depend on some substitute agency. The family was currently experiencing fundamental changes and, as the basic unit of society, was under great strain. The profound changes in family structure over recent decades were reflected in greater life expectancy, a sharper drop in the birth rate, a decrease in the number of marriages and remarriages and an increase in the divorce rate and the number of single-parent families. The family had also been adversely affected by the prevalence of poverty and the rise in unemployment rates, drug abuse, violence and delinquency; yet it still constituted a safe port where its members could find shelter in times of difficulty. As yet no better framework had been found for meeting the needs of men and women, caring for future generations and upholding society in general.

27. One of the most perplexing changes in family structure had been the fast growth in the number of one-parent families, in most of which the mother was the remaining parent. Such families were confronted with more problems than most, and when the single parent was disabled, those problems multiplied. In Israel, many benefits were now being offered to such families. Families where both parents worked outside the home, known as "dual-career" families, also presented enormous problems in that they were often exposed to a higher level of pressure, conflict and tension than other families. There was a need to provide public facilities to meet their special needs. In Israel, special legislation had been promoted in that respect. Working women were faced with contradictory norms and values which made it difficult for them to participate fully in the work force and advance

(Ms. Simha, Israel)

professionally. They were bound by a traditional set of values in which priority was given to home and family and to their central role as mother, while at the same time they struggled to maintain their status in the work-place.

28. Children and youth were the future of any society and must be given every opportunity for a good upbringing and education. A diversified range of flexible services should be provided for meeting their needs and for supplementing the responsibilities of parents. Domestic violence was another subject which merited special attention as it had serious physical and psychological effects on its victims. Children raised in a violent atmosphere tended to become violent themselves. The problem should be dealt with from a multi-disciplinary perspective with a view to the adoption of concrete measures to deal with it.

29. Last but not least, she called for recognition of the important contribution made by non-governmental organizations in the social arena and said that their continued co-operation must be actively supported and encouraged. She invited all members of the third committee to participate in an international conference on the family to be held in Israel in 1994.

30. Mr. ALFARO-PINEDA (El Salvador) said that the encouraging events of the previous months had resulted in a more promising social situation in some parts of the world, but that the situation in less developed countries had continued to deteriorate. While ideological barriers were disappearing and political change was affording greater freedom and confidence in the future, the barriers between industrialized countries and developing countries had become even more difficult to remove.

31. Social problems were inseparable from the prevailing global economic conditions, which were becoming increasingly difficult for countries that required loans to finance their national programmes. The lack of programmes to meet the immediate needs of the developing world's growing population was a serious problem, and the prospects for improvement in economic conditions were not very promising, owing to the obligatory structural adjustments. Such difficulties had resulted in catastrophic internal situations in the countries affected, which threatened the security of the citizens and prompted their emigration, thereby disturbing the normal development of neighbouring countries. The greatest danger was that groups opposed to democracy would take advantage of such situations, using the illusion of a utopian social order to try to impose obsolete political systems that ended in suffering, death and destruction.

32. El Salvador had suffered under those conditions for more than 10 years, in a conflict that had seriously damaged its economic infrastructure and caused many deaths. The search for a peaceful solution had become the highest priority of those Salvadorians who wished to build a modern society.

33. Young people, who were the future leaders of the country, were a source of hope in El Salvador. War had constituted the greatest obstacle to the social progress of El Salvador's youth. However, it had also obligated young people to

(Mr. Alfaro-Pineda, El Salvador)

participate directly in building a nation in which they could enjoy equal opportunity, inalienable rights and stable conditions. Through tireless work and study, young people were participating more and more actively in building the future of their country, to the advantage of all the Salvadorian people. Central America was the final scene of the cold war, and once it had resolved its conflicts and difficulties, the social situation throughout the world would be on the way to improvement.

34. Miss CHAUKE (Zimbabwe) said that there were over 270,000 disabled persons in Zimbabwe and that Zimbabwe's war of liberation had contributed considerably to that number. However, her Government had elaborated a policy on the prevention of disability, on rehabilitation and on equalization of opportunities for the disabled. In accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/470), that policy emphasized the role of disabled persons as citizens, rather than as clients of social services. In addition, a bill to integrate the disabled in society was currently being drafted in Zimbabwe.

35. In Zimbabwe, the idea that disability was not inability was taken very seriously, and disabled persons were considered a vital resource for development. Although the exercise of right of disabled persons to choose jobs had greatly increased in Zimbabwe, massive training programmes were needed to give them the necessary skills.

36. Zimbabwe had also addressed the issue of rehabilitation. Legislation had been enacted for the compensation of war victims, and the results of a national disability survey carried out in 1982 were currently being analysed by local and foreign consultants. The Government had also established a national rehabilitation centre that provided medical, paramedical, psycho-social and vocational job placement services. In addition, a nation-wide rehabilitation programme was being operated by the Department of Health. Disabled persons themselves, who had brought their plight to society's attention through their national organization in Zimbabwe, were to be credited for those achievements.

37. Because the African continent's problems had been complicated by poverty, wars, droughts and underdevelopment, her delegation strongly supported the vigorous implementation of plans of action, including public awareness campaigns, for the Decade of Disabled Persons before the end of the Decade. She supported the proposal in the draft resolution on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons that the Secretary-General should review the regular budgetary process to ensure that resources were adequate to implement the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. She also supported the proposal that Member States should be requested to contribute generously to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade to implement special projects. The African Rehabilitation Institute was in particular need of financial and technical assistance because of the deteriorating economic and social situation in Africa, which had been exacerbated by structural changes.



(Miss Chauke, Zimbabwe)

38. While the Decade had succeeded in generating public awareness of the situation of the disabled, action to improve that situation should become its new priority. Her delegation supported plans to convene a major meeting to mark the end of the Decade, with the hope that such a meeting would encourage the implementation of programmes after the end of the Decade. Her delegation was optimistic that the goals of the Decade would be attained in the near future.

39. Mr. ALLAFI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Algerian delegate had spoken on behalf of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union on issues of social development. His delegation wished to make some additional comments regarding agenda item 92. He thanked the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs for its efforts in implementing United Nations resolutions on the disabled and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. He also supported the Secretary-General's determination to strengthen the Disabled Persons Unit of the Centre. His country gave its full support to the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. An examination of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/470) showed a regrettable flagging of international solidarity and interest. The 147 national committees in 1981 had fallen to 70, which played a weak co-ordinating role. Nevertheless, it was still possible to revitalize the Decade with the help of United Nations bodies and agencies and concerned non-governmental organizations. His country appealed to those countries which had allowed the national committees to lapse to revive them, and those countries which had not yet established such co-ordinating committees to do so. Everything should be done over the coming two years to achieve as many as possible of the goals of the Decade. His country supported the idea of a ministerial-level world conference to be held in 1993 in order to mark the end of the Decade. His country was willing to help to prepare for such a conference.

40. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya stressed the need to devote particular attention to the disabled, and especially the severely disabled, in the developing countries. International co-operation should help to provide technical expertise to those countries in order to develop their facilities and services for the disabled. He expressed his gratitude to those countries which had offered such assistance, in particular the countries of northern Europe. During the current year the disabled in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had established an independent league through which they put their concerns and needs to the General People's Congress. Finally, he stressed that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was fully committed to achieving the goals of the Decade and placed its legislative and technical experience regarding the disabled at the disposal of the developing countries.

41. Mr. AL-BADI (Oman) said that human resources were one of the most important factors in development, being both the means and the goal of development. Accordingly, Oman had devoted particular attention to youth programmes, declared 1983 as a Youth Year with numerous cultural and social programmes, and participated in the activities of the International Youth Year, 1985. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said had donated the ship Fulk al-Salamah (the Ark of Peace) for use in UNESCO's Silk Road programme, in which Oman's youth would participate.



(Mr. Al-Badi, Oman)

42. A sound human resources policy must include care for the disabled, who formed some 10 per cent of society. Such care should include rehabilitation, reintegration, guidance, training and employment for the disabled. It was also important to educate and sensitize the general public to the problems of the disabled. Oman was conducting a general survey of the disabled in co-operation with the rehabilitation programme of the Voluntary Fund. In 1987, a care and rehabilitation centre for the disabled had been established. Omani legislation guaranteed the allocation to the disabled of a certain proportion of jobs in both the private and the public sectors. Funds were also earmarked for projects for the disabled, who were encouraged to participate in cultural, social and sporting activities. There was a social security umbrella for the totally disabled and the disabled who had not received vocational rehabilitation.

43. It was important to provide care and rest to the aged. Oman offered such assistance in accordance with the International Plan of Action on the Aging.

44. Mr. WARADI (Fiji), speaking on items 92, 96, 99 and 104, said that in spite of the progress made in implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, much remained to be done. The Meeting of Experts on Alternative Ways to Mark the End of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had provided a useful basis for organizing future policies and programmes. His delegation welcomed the increased attention given to the plight of the disabled and supported the deliberate shift in emphasis to the abilities of people with functional limitations. The effectiveness of that approach had been proved time and again in a wide variety of areas.

45. Under its national development plan, Fiji provided educational programmes to ensure the full integration of disabled persons into society. National co-ordinating committees for the disabled arranged for the participation of their members in national as well as regional meetings, including sporting competitions organized by regional parent bodies. Fiji continued to review its national legislation to promote the integration and full participation of disabled persons in society. His delegation fully supported the long-term strategy to the year 2000 and beyond: a society for all.

46. Young people represented 55 per cent of the population of Fiji. The follow-up activities to the International Youth Year had achieved the basic goals of formulating and implementing integrated youth policies and programmes and promoting awareness of the significant role of national co-ordination mechanisms in youth policy development. Youth programmes were given high priority in all national development plans in Fiji. To meet their needs two basic goals had been set: improved employment opportunities and full integration into society. Academic and vocational training institutions had been established for that purpose. His country looked forward to participating in United Nations youth programmes, which would enhance its efforts in that field.

47. The initiative to focus attention on the need to promote the integration of the aged into the economic, social and cultural life of the family and the

(Mr. Waradi, Fiji)

community had been timely. The contribution of the aged to national development should feature more prominently in future plans. The extended family was still very much the norm in Fiji and in many parts of the Pacific region. The transition from the close-knit, extended family to the more exclusive, nuclear family seemed to be the result of modernization and affluence. The two, however, were not necessarily mutually exclusive. It should be possible to strike a balance, combining the best of the traditional family structure with the features of the modern family.

48. Mr. KALLEHAUGE (Denmark) said that the time had come to evaluate the World Programme of Action for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, and to determine what would follow the Decade. The best way to mark the end of the Decade would be to elaborate a new policy which would make the intentions of the World Programme of Action more operational. The Programme was so comprehensive and abstract that it did not offer much guidance on how to transform its goals into active policies. The new policy, therefore, would have to specify methods of achieving the goals of the Decade.

49. Public awareness of the situation of disabled persons continued to be a priority, since stereotypical assumptions about the disabled had often resulted in unequal treatment of disabled persons and their relegation to a position of political powerlessness. The capacity of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to society had not been fully appreciated. He therefore supported the proposal that all legislative bodies should hold special sessions in 1992 to discuss the World Programme of Action, with special emphasis on equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. In Denmark, annual debates of that type had proved useful in making the disabled more visible and in drawing attention to the shortcomings of legislation and of the public services offered to disabled persons.

50. The Nordic Council of Organizations of Disabled Persons, of which he was President, supported the proposal to elaborate international standard minimum rules regarding the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, and offered its assistance to that project as a consultative body. There were two possible approaches to the task: to draft rules that met the needs of the disabled while remaining appropriate to all people (for example, in building and transportation regulations and in specifications for communications equipment such as telephones), thereby obviating the need for special provisions concerning disabled persons; or to draft standard rules based on the functional limitations of the disabled, in order to eliminate all physical, social, economic, political and cultural barriers. The diversity of the problems concerned would probably result in a compromise where both methods would be used in different areas.

51. The full integration of disabled persons into society could not be accomplished solely through social and health services. Policies for the disabled must be national policies that pervaded all areas of social life, schools and universities, housing and labour market policies, planning of public transportation, and cultural, sporting and political life.

(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

52. In order to avoid duplication of effort in the elaboration of international standard minimum rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, and to prevent conflicts with the ongoing international standardization work, he recommended that such work should be co-ordinated by the United Nations. No international standardization work should be undertaken without an awareness of the needs of the disabled, since there were many areas in which the relevance of those needs had not yet been recognized.

53. The goal of integration was to eliminate discrimination in both of its forms: intentional discrimination aiming at the exclusion of disabled persons, and discrimination through neglect or lack of understanding. Although public awareness campaigns had succeeded in reducing the incidence of intentional discrimination, discrimination through neglect was much more difficult to combat, since its negative effects were often felt only by disabled persons themselves. However, the elaboration of standard minimum rules would make the problems of the disabled better known, and would encourage the reparation of previous errors in that respect. Additional information and awareness campaigns were also essential, since public understanding of the situation of the disabled would lead to solidarity with them, and solidarity would lead to equality.

54. He supported the proposal from the 1990 meeting of experts in Finland that the United Nations should hold regional conferences in collaboration with disabled people and their organizations to prepare documents on the rights of disabled persons. That idea should be combined with the proposal to establish umbrella organizations of disabled people at the national, regional and international levels. Such umbrella organizations already existed in the Nordic countries, and he hoped that more of them would be established around the world. Another recommendation from the meeting in Finland had been that donor countries and their development agencies should give highest priority to disability issues in their assistance programmes. The Nordic countries had already acted on that recommendation by holding a meeting in which Nordic development agencies had reported on their activities in the field of disability. In addition, a conference on that subject was scheduled for 1991. He urged development agencies to integrate disability components in all technical co-operation programmes and in development programmes for education, job training, building of houses, town planning and public transportation. The goal was not to adapt disabled persons to the environment, but to adapt the environment to the needs of all.

55. Ms. BOTERO (Colombia) said that the supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137-E/1990/35) provided very useful information and showed that while the developed countries had experienced sustained growth, living conditions in the developing countries had substantially deteriorated. Although there had been encouraging improvements in the international political climate, there was cause for concern about social conditions. In carrying out national development policies aimed at promoting economic growth, most developing countries had not taken into account the social dimension as an essential aspect of development. Intervention by the State could be decisive in adopting development models that helped bring about a real redistribution of income and reduced the level of poverty among the most vulnerable groups.



(Ms. Botero, Colombia)

56. There was a marked contrast between the developed and developing countries with regard to health care and maternal and child mortality. Reduced public expenditures in the field of education in developing countries were also alarming. Government support for social services had been cut back or frozen largely because of the external debt burden and economic adjustment measures. Such developments called into question the social efficacy of such measures since the outlook continued to be very discouraging.

57. The developing countries had explicitly acknowledged their responsibility in defining policies and revitalizing economic growth and development. Today more than ever the developing world was aware of the effort required of it. At the same time, the developed countries had undertaken the commitment to support the initiatives of the developing countries and promote internal changes aimed at restoring equilibrium in their domestic economies. Further studies on the world social situation were unnecessary. There was a need for political will and decisions to solve the problems at hand, particularly those affecting the most vulnerable groups. She hoped that effective measures would be taken to find real solutions to those problems.

58. Mr. AL-HASSAN (Jordan) said that the improvement of social conditions had been hampered by economic fluctuations, austerity measures, increased likelihood of disability, drug addiction, alcoholism, pollution, radiation and armed conflicts. Economic progress could not be achieved without social justice and equality of chances. Poverty, suffering, desertification, deterioration of the environment, illiteracy and the growing gap between the haves and the have-nots threatened society. The Secretary-General's report had noted a decline in living conditions in most of the developing countries, which suffered from poverty, malnutrition and insufficient resources. Continuing conflicts in those regions would have an adverse impact on development plans. Particularly grave was Israel's rejection of Arab and international peace efforts on the Palestinian issue aimed at securing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of a Palestinian State. International peace and security were essential for economic and social progress.

59. The needs and cultural background of the disabled varied from country to country. The conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on Alternative Ways to Mark the End of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the outline of a long-term strategy to the year 2000 and beyond were extremely useful. More efforts should be devoted to increasing international awareness of the disabled and promoting of social security, education, vocational training and cultural, recreational and sporting activities for the disabled, as well as providing rehabilitation and full integration for them. More national committees for the disabled should be established. Within the framework of the World Programme of Action, Jordan had since 1983 expanded institutional services, education and rehabilitation for the disabled.



(Mr. Al-Hassan, Jordan)

60. Youth was inseparable from society, politics and the economy as a whole and their social and cultural problems must be taken into account when dealing with contemporary problems. Jordan was a preponderantly young society with nearly 75 per cent of the population under the age of 30. The young were an essential element of development and vital for the future of the country. Youth education and care were an investment in the future; the protection of youth from addiction, disease and environmental hazards would redound to the good of society as a whole.

61. Mr. KHALIL (Egypt) said, regarding the world social situation, that his delegation had examined with interest the supplement to the 1989 Report (A/45/137), which emphasized statistics more than analysed causes or proposed solutions. It warned against excessive optimism over developments resulting from the new era of co-operation and conciliation between East and West, since political progress had not been accompanied by corresponding economic or social progress. In most developing countries, particularly in Africa, GDP had remained stable or declined over the proceeding decade, while population growth had accelerated. Developing countries had been affected by natural and man-made disasters including wars, destruction of the environment and dumping of toxic wastes. They had also suffered from declining trade and protectionist measures adopted by the developed countries, as well as a worsening of the debt crisis. Infant and maternal mortality rates were high and 98 per cent of the world's illiterates were in the developing countries, where half a billion people suffered from hunger and malnutrition. The social and economic benefits of the new-found political harmony between the countries of the North were restricted to those countries as the gap between the rich and poor countries grew wider. It was therefore vitally important to adopt policies of structural adjustment in most developing countries.

62. In the view of the report, structural adjustment was aimed primarily at coping with debt and debt service, and only secondarily at making optimum use of resources. His delegation felt that growth should be directed internally towards the humanitarian development urged by United Nations resolutions, rather than towards the exporting of resources in order to service debt, even though such international obligations must be respected. In its negotiations with international funding institutions, Egypt attempted to formulate a structural adjustment strategy which reconciled the social and economic needs of Egyptian society with Egypt's financial obligations and avoided sudden swings in economic measures. It was necessary to make the international economy more balanced, to reduce the gap between the rich countries and the poor countries and to preserve the advances made in the relations between the great Powers. The savings afforded by disarmament might be used to revitalize the economies of developing countries by alleviating their debt burden and reversing the negative flow of resources.

63. Regarding policies and programmes involving youth, he praised the efforts of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. However, he regretted that not many of the goals of the International Youth Year had been achieved. Nor had he found evidence of progress in the eradication of illiteracy among youth over the current year, which had been designated International Literacy Year. His country supported the recommendation of the Report of the Secretary-General

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(Mr. Khalil, Egypt)

(A/45/422) to prepare an inventory on the youth-related projects and activities of the United Nations system, with a view to identifying priority areas for joint action.

64. Egypt was working actively to integrate youth into society, to provide young people with job opportunities and to involve them in development. Projects included co-operative land reclamation schemes in the desert, and summer camps where high moral values were inculcated. There were also successful dialogues between young people and experts regarding contemporary social and international developments and challenges. In the early 1970s, the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports had been established. The Chairman of that Council was also head of the Egyptian United Nations Association, a non-governmental organization aimed at boosting public awareness of the United Nations and its role in maintaining peace and security and promoting development across the world by holding seminars and debates between pupils and students and United Nations officials in Egypt. He suggested that that experiment be emulated in other countries as a suitable means of celebrating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs might be able to organize a series of local seminars and discuss an appropriate means for evaluating the conclusions of such seminars over the coming two years. Such a scheme would be simpler and less expensive than a series of regional seminars bringing together mainly officials without sufficient youth representation. If there was sufficient response, the development of such a mechanism should be reviewed in several years' time.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS  
  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
17th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 23 October 1990  
at 6 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. COOMBS (New Zealand)  
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs. Coombs (New Zealand),  
(Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (A/45/137-E/1990/35)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING  
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued)  
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AGENDA ITEM 96: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued) (A/45/225,  
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AGENDA ITEM 99: QUESTION OF AGING (continued) (A/45/207, A/45/420)

AGENDA ITEM 104: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (continued) (A/45/365;  
A/C.3/45/3)

1. Mr. TROTTIER (Canada) recalled that Canada had supported the General Assembly resolution proclaiming the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and had been a leading supporter of the objectives of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. As the end of the Decade approached, an appraisal could be made of action taken to integrate disabled persons into society. He described measures taken in Canada for that purpose.

2. In 1991, Canada would be conducting a second post-census survey to collect data on disabled persons that would enable policies and programmes to be better designed. Canada was taking measures to promote independent living for persons with disabilities, and was providing support for a network of independent living centres. Canada's National Access Awareness Week highlighted the need for disabled persons to have access to all places they wished to enter.

3. Canada supported the recommendations contained in the feasibility study on alternative ways to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/45/470), and believed that persons with disabilities must be involved in the decision-making process.

4. The Canadian delegation expressed its satisfaction with the report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/45/420). He hoped that the report would serve as a catalyst for many activities at various levels; activities were already being planned in Canada to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Aging. Canada was confident that the celebration of the tenth anniversary would provide an opportunity to develop a blueprint for policies concerning older persons in the twenty-first century.

5. He considered that the draft global calendar of events on aging, 1991-1992, contained in annex I to the report of the Secretary-General would be very useful to those involved in planning activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption

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(Mr. Trottier, Canada)

of the International Plan of Action on Aging. The Canadian delegation agreed that it was necessary to set tangible targets on aging, to be reached co-operatively by the year 2001, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, and he expressed the hope that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs would successfully finalize a set of global targets for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, in 1992.

6. He recalled that 1990 had been proclaimed International Literacy Year, and described literacy programmes in Canada as they affected senior citizens. According to recent statistics, only one in three Canadians between the ages of 55 and 69 possessed reading abilities in English and French sufficient to deal with written material encountered daily. Moreover, 15 per cent of persons in that age group described themselves as being unable to read. One way of improving that situation was to simplify the language on forms and other government documents that seniors were required to fill in to establish their rights, and the Government of Canada had in fact just taken an initiative to ensure that government publications could be understood. Since September 1988, the National Literacy Programme had supported some 40 projects designed to combat illiteracy in Canada, and a National Literacy Strategy for older Canadians would be released in 1990.

7. Lastly, in addition to the activities to be carried out in 1992 to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Aging, the International Year of the Family, to be celebrated in 1994, would provide another opportunity to examine the role that seniors must play in society.

8. Mr. WICKREMASINGE (Sri Lanka) said that the reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the cluster of items now before the Third Committee provided a useful basis for the Committee's deliberations, and he expressed the hope that they would help to enable the Committee to complete its work on time. The statements made by other delegations also constituted a useful contribution to the discussion.

9. He then described Sri Lanka's experience in the field of social development. The Government of Sri Lanka had accorded the highest priority to the question of social development and was seeking to give the people a new deal through a new vision and a new order of things.

10. Sri Lanka had a population of almost 17 million people, more than half of whom were dependent, and 80 per cent of whom lived in rural areas and relied on agriculture. Factors that were often beyond the Government's control had caused poverty to spread.

11. In order to combat hunger and malnutrition, the Government of Sri Lanka had launched a scheme of subsidies, popularly known as Janasaviya, or "the People's Strength". Under the scheme, eligible family units were paid a monthly allowance of 2,500 rupees, part of which was used for consumption while the other portion was deposited in an interest-yielding savings account. The scheme was not merely charity, but was designed to help the individual eventually to stand on his own feet. In that connection, he recalled the words of the United States President,

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(Mr. Wickremasinghe, Sri Lanka)

Abraham Lincoln, who had said "You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves". That reflected the current thinking of the Government of Sri Lanka in the battle it was waging against poverty, ignorance and fear.

12. In 1978, the President of Sri Lanka had launched the village reawakening programme known as Udagam Vyaparaya to deal with the problem of homelessness. By 1988, the 10-year target had been exceeded, and it could be considered part of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, which was the most ambitious programme undertaken by the international community in the field of human settlements.

13. Sri Lanka was conscious of the need for a harmonious relationship between man and the environment as a prerequisite for social and economic progress, and had adopted a "National Conservation Strategy".

14. Environmental degradation was threatening the very existence of mankind and had spawned such problems as the gradual depletion of the ozone layer and global warming. In the case of the latter, if remedial steps were not taken in time, the biblical "great deluge" could well occur by the year 2020. In other words, according to that frightening estimate, human civilization would last only ten thousand days more. Man should realize that it was not in his best interest to interfere unduly with his natural surroundings. While the eradication of hunger and poverty, human resource and institutional development and management of population growth were priority aspects of socio-economic development, the highest priority should be given to current environmental problems.

15. According to the Secretary-General, all countries should take effective action to protect and enhance the environment, bearing in mind the specific needs of the developing countries, and the developed countries should bear the main responsibility for taking such action. Resources should be channelled and rational, environmentally sound technologies should be transferred to the developing countries on preferential terms. The goals set in General Assembly resolution 44/228 for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development scheduled to be held in 1992 needed to be realized.

16. Sri Lanka was co-operating fully in preparing for the aforementioned conference, which would have to devise a modus vivendi that would help to ensure the very survival and existence of mankind.

17. Sri Lanka was addressing the questions of the family, children, youth, the disabled and the aged from the broader perspective of social welfare. In that context, Sri Lanka had launched programmes to supply free food stamps, free education at all levels, free health care and other similar programmes which were paid for entirely from the State's coffers. Some of the most tangible results of Sri Lanka's social welfare programmes were a literacy rate of up to 90 per cent, an infant mortality rate of 27.04 per thousand live births and a relatively high life-expectancy at birth, of 72 years for females and 68 for males, thus ensuring for the people fuller enjoyment of human rights.

(Mr. Wickremasinge, Sri Lanka)

18. Sri Lanka had given pride of place to the youth of the country and had created the necessary institutional mechanisms for its education, training and employment. A Presidential Commission on youth had been appointed to study the problems of youth and in addition, a Ministry of Youth and Sports and other departments at the national level had been set up to address the training needs of young people at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, in all disciplines.

19. Regionally, the country was co-operating with six other south Asian nations, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan; together with those countries it constituted the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC). The areas of co-operation included social development. Sri Lanka had a good record of co-operation with the international community, and with the United Nations system in particular, in supporting initiatives to achieve greater social well-being for mankind.

20. Sri Lanka had recently become a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child because it regarded the Convention as a useful contribution to children's emancipation and welfare. The Government of Sri Lanka was in the process of drafting the National Children's Charter, which would take into account the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the country's own obligations arising from its signature and ratification of that instrument.

21. As far as co-operation among developing countries was concerned, Sri Lanka was participating actively in the Group of 77, the Commonwealth and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, particularly through the Action Programme for Economic Co-operation of the Non-Aligned Countries and the Colombo Plan. His delegation hoped that in the future new initiatives would be forthcoming from the international community, to the benefit of all countries and peoples.

22. In conclusion, his delegation would welcome greater interaction between the Commission for Social Development and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development because of the pivotal role played by research.

23. Mr. BABOS (Romania) said that it was not by chance that the Third Committee was considering items 90, 92, 96, 99 and 104 simultaneously, because they were all closely related matters. For example, there was a link between the social function of the family and the level of the participation of youth in determining the destiny of the society in which it lived and a link between the well-being of the family and the status of old people and disabled persons within the society. Consequently, in dealing with one particular problem, the whole range of issues should be borne in mind and the conflicts between priorities were especially difficult to resolve.

24. In Romania, the frightening magnitude of the suffering of hundreds of thousands of sick children or disabled and old people had only been revealed only in the past 10 months. The changes that had occurred in Romania during that time had underlined the meagreness of the resources available to alleviate that suffering quickly.

(Mr. Babos, Romania)

25. Although significant changes had taken place in Romania in certain respects, in the promotion and protection of the human rights of the individual and the freedoms of the citizen, as far as the improvement of the condition of some extremely vulnerable groups was concerned, those changes did not meet the real needs of the people. His delegation wished to express its appreciation for the generous support from the countries that had responded so promptly to Romania's requests and to thank those countries which during the years of isolation under the dictatorial régime had drawn attention to the violation of human rights in Romania. Furthermore, the confidence expressed by certain countries that the renewal process in Romania was irreversible in itself represented very valuable support, which would stimulate and accelerate the process so that Romania would cease to be a country reaching for democracy and become a democratic country in the fullest sense of the word.

26. The protection and guarantee of human rights was one of the areas where declarations of principle were not enough; practical measures were needed and Romania was currently concentrating its efforts in that direction.

27. Young people were currently powerful agents of change and Romania's hope. Freed from the former rigid structures, young people were setting the pace in the creation in Romania of a united society under the rule of law. Their initiatives were reflected in the growing role being played by non-governmental youth organizations as determining factors in the practical solution of the distressing problems afflicting the country.

28. Nevertheless, Romania lacked an appropriate national basis for instruction, because numerous educators did not have professional qualifications, having long devoted themselves to ideology instead of knowledge.

29. At the same time, the accelerated pace of transition to a market economy was creating new problems and it was estimated that by the end of 1990 there would be 120,000 unemployed persons in Romania, with that figure rising to nearly 1 million in 1991; in view of the scarcity of available economic resources, the attempt to reduce the social impact of that phenomenon, which was unprecedented for Romania, could intensify the competition among social priorities.

30. Referring in particular to the situation of disabled persons in Romania, he noted that they numbered approximately 600,000. Prior to December 1989, the concept of disabled persons had not been embodied in legislation and the previous Constitution had not recognized the status of such persons. There had been only two associations of disabled persons: one for the blind and one for deaf mutes.

31. With regard to the specific situation which Romania had inherited, it was obvious that virtually nothing had been done in the eight years which had elapsed since the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, and the misguided population policy implemented between 1966 and 1989 had considerably increased the number of seriously disabled persons. That did not mean that an optimum solution to the situation could be achieved through the liberalization of abortion, for example. An appropriate social education, including family planning,



(Mr. Babos, Romania)

was the framework within which more feasible solutions could be found. Romania fully shared the view that the objectives of the International Year of the Family should be achieved in harmony with national and local conditions and that the task of the United Nations should be to support efforts at the national level.

32. In early 1990, urgent measures had been taken in Romania to triple the subsistence allowances for disabled persons in schools, long-term care facilities and nursing homes for the elderly. Social assistance had also been established for disabled persons with no income. The number of maintenance and teaching staff at institutions for the disabled would be tripled.

33. In the past six months, various organizations of the disabled or organizations to assist them had been established. The United Nations recommendation that a national committee of the disabled should be established was being put into practice. A proposal had been made to include an article on the status and rights of the disabled in Romania's new Constitution.

34. Romania was determined to implement effectively all the provisions of the international conventions on the disabled to which it was a party. In that connection, it supported the proposal by Sweden concerning the establishment of an open-ended working group to consider the problems of the disabled.

35. Romania appreciated the solidarity shown by the countries of Western Europe and the assistance granted by various international intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and many others, and the contribution made by the European Economic Community and the World Bank to accelerating the implementation of programmes for the protection of children and the disabled in Romania.

36. Mrs. MBELLA NGOMBA (Cameroon) said that three factors were increasingly impeding the attainment of several social objectives as embodied in various declarations and plans of action adopted by the General Assembly with the sole objective of alleviating the plight of the vast majority of mankind, irrespective of categories. Those three factors were related to the worsening of economic and social conditions, the lack of common parameters for the determination of new criteria for achieving development and the lack of political and financial commitment which would provide a basis for the implementation of decisions.

37. The difficulty in coming to terms with social problems appeared to derive from the lack of a political will to establish the inextricable link between social deprivation and the lack of economic expansion. However, it could be seen clearly that the lack of economic opportunities in several developing countries together with austerity measures designed to confront the resultant economic crisis had trapped several societies in a vicious circle of budget cuts affecting social programmes, with the consequent reduction in government funding and grants for schools and the displacement of youth from rural to urban areas. That exodus had led to overcrowding in several third world cities, with a concomitant rise in the crime rate, particularly among youth.

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(Mrs. Mbella Ngomba, Cameroon)

38. The phenomenon of rising unemployment and the way in which it affected the morale of youth was rapidly becoming a major preoccupation for the Government of Cameroon, since youth accounted for more than 52 per cent of the country's population. The negative impact of structural adjustment programmes was beginning to threaten the capacity of the Government to carry out educational policies and programmes and its commitment to provide free public education for all youth up to university level; young people were increasingly faced with the prospect of unemployment, even for university graduates. Her delegation looked forward with interest to the results of the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action recently adopted by the World Summit for Children and to the thirty-second session of the Commission for Social Development, which would have as two of its major themes the problem of the integration of young people into society and the social impact of the critical economic environment on developing countries.

39. With regard to the emergence of a new focus for development in co-operation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other bodies, her delegation was convinced that the United Nations must play a significant role in the establishment of a common platform on which developing countries could later build their association with those major funding organizations, with a view to entering into effective bilateral and multilateral negotiations so as to enhance the capacity of Governments and their communities to design and implement social programmes which met their economic goals.

40. With regard to the item concerning the disabled, Cameroon endorsed the results of the feasibility study on alternative ways to mark the end of the Decade of Disabled Persons (A/45/470), in 1992, and endorsed the conclusion reached by the group of experts that had met in Finland in May 1990 that one such way would be to develop a strategy for action to the year 2000 and beyond. Cameroon also endorsed the recommendation to convene a ministerial-level world conference on disability in 1993 with the theme of "A society for all by the year 2010", and with a long-term strategy clearly establishing minimum progress for Member States to make in improving the situation of disabled persons.

41. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to strengthen the Disabled Persons Unit at the United Nations Office at Vienna so as to provide technical and administrative guidance for the execution of the activities relating to the end of the Decade and beyond. The ultimate objective should not be limited to the rehabilitation of the handicapped but should include the elaboration of standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for the disabled, whether they were children, young people or adults.

42. With regard to the designation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, Cameroon recognized the difficulty that the United Nations Office at Vienna faced in trying to co-ordinate the celebration of family values against a background of diverse religious, cultural and legal situations. Programmes under the Year should therefore be planned nationally, with the United Nations Office at Vienna playing only an advisory and co-ordinating role. In that connection, her delegation endorsed the organizational recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's report (A/45/365).

43. Mrs. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh), speaking under agenda item 90, said that the Committee had before it the supplement to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (A/45/137-E/1990/35), which painted a gloomy picture of the developing world. The situation in the least developed countries was even worse. There, very basic human needs remained unfulfilled.

44. In Bangladesh the approach taken to development had changed. In the past, Bangladesh had not always focused sufficiently on human resources development and quality of life. Now, the Bangladesh authorities were aware that they must place greater emphasis on quality than on quantity.

45. At the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries a new programme of action had been adopted. Both the Programme of Action and the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade gave priority to the removal of poverty and hunger and to the strengthening of institutions.

46. With regard to agenda item 92, the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was drawing to a close, and although many of its goals had not been achieved there had been some definite achievements. The chief achievement was having developed greater awareness of the problems of the disabled. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report (A/45/470), that concern for the disabled should not end with the Decade. Bangladesh endorsed the recommendations set out in the report.

47. Bangladesh was firmly committed to implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and that commitment was reflected in its National Policy on Disabled Persons, which encouraged full participation by the disabled in the development process. The goal was that the disabled should be self-reliant. The Ministry of Social Welfare had undertaken some specific programmes in the areas of education, training, employment and rehabilitation. It also helped disabled people set up small enterprises and provided them with interest-free loans for that purpose. In the area of rehabilitation, emphasis was placed on community-based programmes. The National Policy, which took a multidisciplinary approach, had given priority to the needs of disabled women and disabled children.

48. The prevention of disabilities was another area on which Bangladesh focused. The Government promoted educational programmes in that connection with a view to improving nutrition and health care. The programmes in question had helped to prevent blindness and some other handicaps.

49. Bangladesh non-governmental organizations complemented government action by promoting the welfare of the disabled, but the country's programmes suffered from a lack of resources. Assistance was therefore required from donors.

50. Bangladesh shared the concern expressed by other delegations at the financial crisis faced by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Despite its lack of resources, Bangladesh would make a contribution to the Fund. The United Nations system had an important role to play in meeting the needs of the disabled. Better co-ordination among the specialized agencies would be necessary, however.

(Mrs. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

51. On the subject of agenda item 96, she considered it most regrettable that in many countries young people were unable to contribute to progress because they were often illiterate, or unemployed or were caught in a vicious cycle of drugs and violence. Action must be taken at the national, regional and international levels to mobilize their creative potential.

52. Young people made up one third of the population of Bangladesh. The National Youth Policy was designed to ensure their socio-economic development, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports co-ordinated policy in the field. Special attention was devoted to academic and vocational training for young women in order to ensure equal opportunity. In that connection, she wished to express her gratitude to Austria for the assistance provided in setting up the HOPE office in Bangladesh, whose purpose was to promote youth employment.

53. The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, in 1995, would be a suitable occasion for giving priority to the issue once again. In that connection, Bangladesh endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/422) regarding future priorities. The United Nations, in general and UNESCO, in particular should continue to play a key role in the field in question.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.